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Migratory Farm Workers IN THE ATLANTIC COAST STREAM

A Study in the Belle Glade area of Florida

Circular No. 966

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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By William H. Metzler

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Migratory Farmworkers

IN THE ATLANTIC COAST STREAM

A study in the Belle Glade area of Florida

by William H. Metzler, *Labor Economist, Production Economics Research Branch, Agricultural Research Service*

SUMMARY

Movement of workers from harvest to harvest along the Atlantic coast has been systematized to a greater extent than that of workers in other migratory labor areas of the country. Hence, when the Office of Defense Mobilization asked Federal agencies to "provide the greatest possible continuity of employment . . . for migratory workers," a study of the employment and systematized movement of workers in the Atlantic coast stream became pertinent.

This field study was made in the Belle Glade area of Florida where many Atlantic coast workers spend the winter. A sample of the migratory workers located there in March 1953 was interviewed in regard to employment and earnings in the preceding 12 months. The sample was restricted to Negroes as they constitute 90 percent or more of the migrants along the coast. A sample of crew leaders was also interviewed in order to ascertain their functions in the handling of migratory labor.

Most of these migratory workers came originally from other Southeastern States; more than half came from Georgia. Their movement into Florida was heaviest in the early 1940's, but 20 percent had come in during the last 4 years. Ordinarily they did not enter the Atlantic coast migratory stream until 3 or 4 years after their arrival in Florida.

The migrants were comparatively young. More than 50 percent were under 35 years of age; only 20 percent were over 44. Apparently migratory labor serves as a steppingstone for farm people in the Southeast as they move into other employment.

Households of migratory workers were small, averaging only 2.8 persons. Only 16 percent of the households had more than 4 persons. Heads of approximately one-fourth of the households were women.

These workers were still predominantly rural. Only 25 percent had done any nonfarmwork in the 5 years preceding the interview, and only 4 percent gave nonfarmwork as their major activity during the preceding year.

The movement of these people was highly uniform; 85 percent left in May or June. This was partly due to concerted efforts by employers and public agencies to hold them in Florida until the peak period of local labor use was past. Also, there was little need for them in other States before May 1. But the return movement was almost as uniform.

Patterns of movement outside Florida were also comparatively regular. There was little of the hit-or-miss movement that characterizes migratory workers in some parts of the country. Forty-five percent worked in only 1 State outside Florida. Most frequently this was New York. Another 30 percent went only to 2 States, usually New York and either Virginia, North Carolina, or Maryland. Another 11 percent worked in 3 States outside Florida.

Ten percent of the workers moved from some other State to Florida during the year but did not migrate up the coast. This group of migrants to Florida is the chief source of replenishment of Florida and coastal labor supplies.

Workers in the sample obtained an average of 182 days of employment in the 12 months preceding the interviews, 98 of which were in Florida, and 84 on the trip out of the State. Male heads of households worked an average of 214 days; other workers 16 years old and over, 173 days; and schoolchildren, 84 days. Atlantic coast migrants had an average of 183 days of work; migrants to Florida, 169 days.

The average number of workdays on which no work was done during the last year was 71. According to the workers, 33 of these days were due to unavailability of work in the slack season and 15 more to bad weather, crop losses, and similar external factors. Personal reasons, such as illness, resting, or keeping house, accounted for 14 days. Workers said they were available for work on 48 of the 71 days.

Earnings per worker for the year from farm and nonfarm work averaged $908; $460 in Florida and $448 in other States. Male heads of households averaged $1,169, other adult workers $906, and schoolchildren $289. Atlantic coast migrants averaged $933, migrants to Florida $684. Earnings per household averaged $1,733.

More than half the workers were employed in only a few operations, such as picking beans or picking up potatoes. Others worked in a wide range of farm and nonfarm operations. Employment and earnings were much higher for the latter group. They were also high for workers who went to several States rather than to 1 or 2.

Most of the work was paid for on a piecework basis. Wage rates for a particular crop activity were fairly uniform from New York to Florida, indicating the existence of a single labor market. If rates were lower in one part of the area than in others, workers were likely to drift away.

Yet average earnings per day varied between crops and between areas. Earnings were somewhat higher for picking up potatoes and pulling corn than in most other operations. They were lowest for picking beans. The difference in earnings between crops was related to the fact that women and children predominated on jobs such as picking beans. Earnings by States were highest in Pennsylvania, New York, and Delaware; lowest in Georgia and South Carolina. These differences were partly associated with the prevalence of work in potatoes or beans.

Fifteen percent of the workers did some nonfarm work during the previous 12 months. For this they were paid an average of $6.93 a day. Most of their jobs were in packinghouses, construction, or factories. These workers ranked significantly above average migratory workers in employment and earnings. They averaged 214 days of work and had total average incomes of $1,429.

Employment services have brought system into the movement of harvest workers along the Atlantic coast by encouraging crew leaders to form either season-to-season arrangements to work for the same employers or preseason arrangements to work for farmers who have not already made such commitments. Most of 30 crew leaders interviewed had made season-to-season arrangements with at least 1 employer. In addition, almost half had made preseason arrangements through the employment services. The eventual effect of such a program will be to have all major jobs along the coast handled through season-to-season agreements.

Loss of time of these workers was most common (1) in fall after the workers had returned from their migration up the coast, (2) in periods of crop loss in Florida in winter, (3) among workers who were highly specialized, and (4) among new migrants to Florida. A major problem is the annual slack season in late fall and early winter. Workers can hardly be expected to remain in the Atlantic coast seasonal labor supply so long as this situation exists. So far, replenishment from farms in the southeast has kept the supply from drying up.

How long such replenishments may be expected to continue is of vital concern to east coast farmers. Renewed efforts to hold existing, experienced supplies of labor may be desirable. Retention of existing labor supplies is a problem of the entire Atlantic coast work area. Steps to increase the number of crops that require labor in fall and early winter are of significance to farmer employers throughout the area. Smooth operation of the Atlantic coast seasonal labor market is outstanding, but local employer associations and other agencies can still facilitate continuous employment of harvest workers in all local work areas. Greater usefulness and stability of the Atlantic coast seasonal labor supply can be achieved if the tendency of workers to specialize in a few crops and work areas can be overcome. This may call for special training for farmworkers in how to perform new operations well enough to "make wages" in a reasonable period.

THE ATLANTIC COAST MOVEMENT

Movement of farmworkers from harvest to harvest along the Atlantic coast is not a new phenomenon. As early as 1901 the United States Industrial Commission reported that "colored labor from the South was being used in the New England States and that migration from crop to crop and area to area was an established pattern involving thousands of workers." [1] At that time much of the movement was from Virginia to Rhode Island.

Migration to New York started immediately before World War I and to the New Jersey potato area around 1919. Since then, with the development of new production areas and the drying up of old sources of labor, patterns of migration have changed. Virginia and Maryland have become labor-demand States rather than suppliers of migratory labor for other areas. The source of the movement has shifted farther South, until now most of the coastal migration starts in Florida.

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[1] Quoted in Louis Persch, "An Analysis of the Agricultural Migratory Movements on the Atlantic Seaboard . . . 1930–1950." Thesis, Ph. D. American University, Washington, D. C., June 1953. This dissertation has also been useful in supplying data on the history of the Atlantic coast migration.

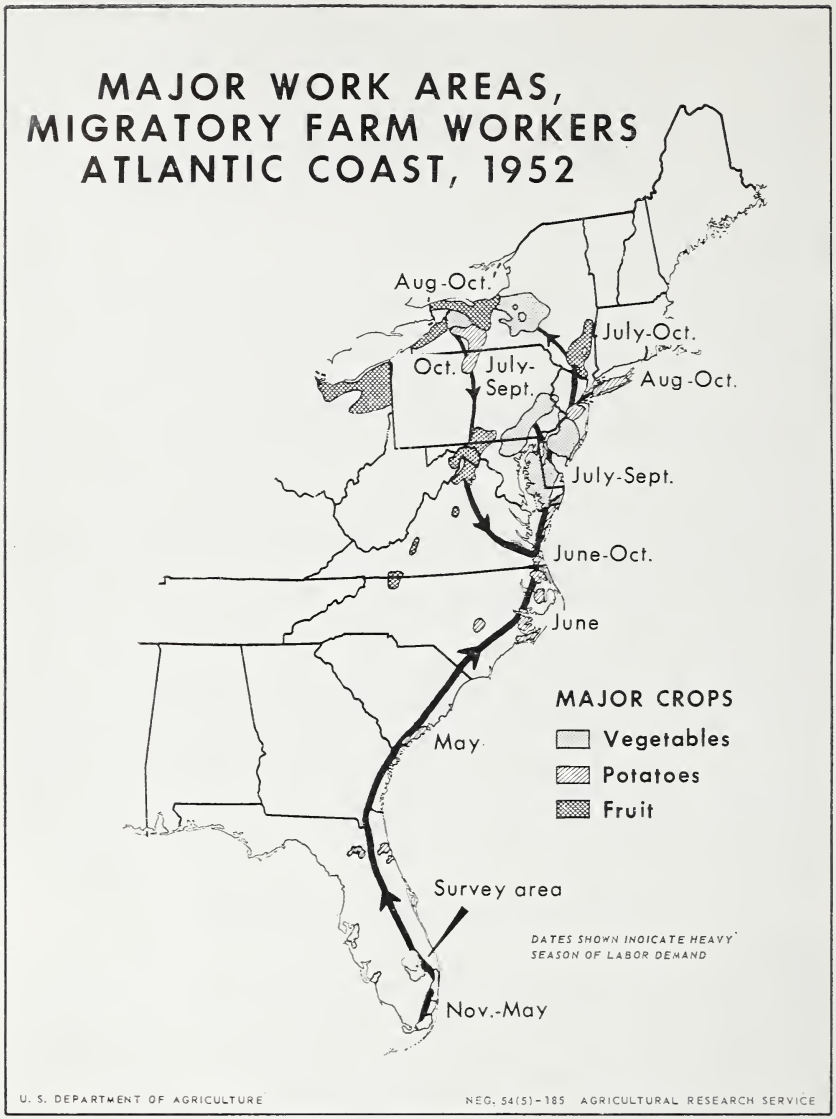

FIGURE 1.—The migratory movement up the Atlantic coast is based on areas of intensive vegetable and fruit production with high labor requirements.

In the 1920's development of winter vegetable and sugarcane areas in Florida made the State the focal point for off-season migration from neighboring States to the north. But the trip to Florida soon became only the first step in a wider chain of movements. An increase in demand for labor by producers of vegetables and fruits in North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey, and New York gradually caused workers to leave their homes in Georgia, Alabama, and other Southeastern States and to follow the Atlantic coast harvests as the major means of earning a livelihood. During

the 1930's workers displaced by machinery and cotton acreage adjustment programs increased the size of the movement.

This movement of workers, then, is associated with production of crops with high harvest-labor requirements: Snap beans, potatoes, tomatoes, sweet corn, apples, and other truck and fruit crops. The paths of movement have shifted as production areas for such crops have changed. A generalized map of these areas and of the pattern of migration is shown in figure 1. In addition to these major areas of seasonal farm labor demand, many minor areas rely on a smaller volume of nonlocal labor.

Size of the Movement

Many efforts have been made to learn the number of workers who move northward along the Atlantic coast each year. C. B. Gilliam of the North Carolina Farm Placement Service estimated the number prior to World War II at about 25,000 (*2*).[2] In 1941, information stations were set up along the coast by State employment services to contact migratory workers moving northward. As part of their duties, employment service personnel obtained figures on the number of farmworkers who passed through their stations. The estimated number of migrants, as indicated by these information-station counts, dropped to 10,000 in 1943 but rose to 14,000 in 1944, 20,000 in 1945, and 25,000 in 1946. As defense manpower needs slackened following World War II, the number of workers in this migratory stream increased. Estimates compiled from information-station and local employment-office data for 1949 indicate that about 58,000 persons moved northward that year.[3] This probably constituted the peak figure for Atlantic coast migration. As national manpower needs increased after the outbreak of hostilities in Korea, the size of this stream again began to diminish.

The size of the movement, then, fluctuates widely depending on the general demand for labor. Many workers shift to other employment when opportunity permits. But when other jobs close down, they drop back into migratory farm labor.

Scheduling and Guiding of Workers

As the supply of labor dwindled in the World War II period, growers, grower associations, and other employers along the Atlantic coast began to compete for available workers. A series of conferences was held at which employment service and agricultural officials explored ways to curtail blind migration and to use more productively the dwindling supply of labor. In 1944, farm labor supervisors from the 10 Atlantic Coast State agricultural extension services met in Raleigh, N. C., and established a cooperative program to obtain better utilization of the available supply. Their plans provided that a representative from each State be sent to Florida ahead of the harvest season. It was agreed that these representatives would avoid disrupting any continuing employment relationships that had been built up between employers and crew leaders, but that they

[2] Italic numbers in parentheses refer to Literature Cited, p. 75.

[3] Unpublished materials submitted to the President's Commission on Migratory Labor by James G. Gray, Jr., Bureau of Employment Security, U. S. Department of Labor.

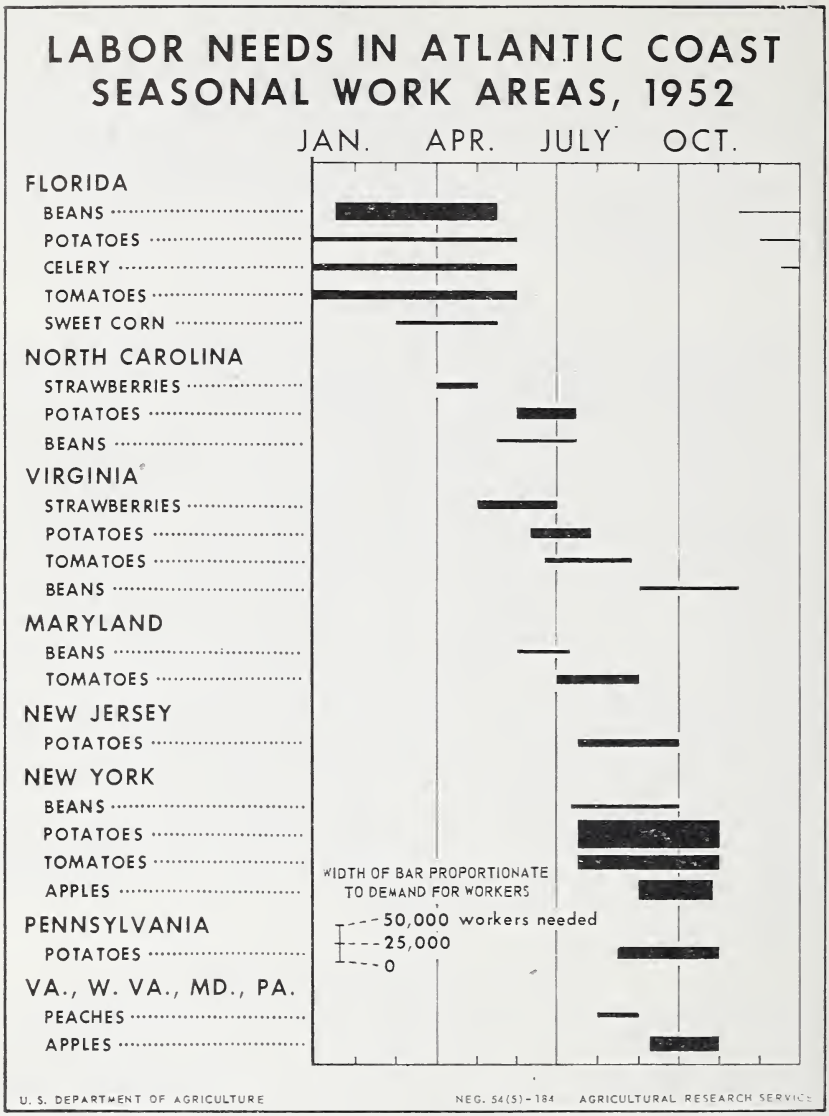

FIGURE 2.—Timing of harvests along the Atlantic coast is such as to afford continuous spring and summer employment for farm workers who are willing to move from harvest to harvest.

would be free to obtain commitments from other crew leaders for the coming season (7). It was believed that this method would assure producers a more dependable labor supply, and that it would also give workers greater assurance of a full season's work.

The fundamental principles worked out by agricultural extension officials are still in operation. In March or April of each year, representatives of the various State employment services invite crew leaders to designated points in Florida and work out with them a series of work commitments that will occupy them through the

summer. These commitments cover a considerable proportion of the migratory workers who leave Florida, but there are still many harvest workers who are not members of crews. These "self-starters" or "freewheelers" may have partial commitments of their own or they may just start out to find a job wherever they can. In some areas they may find it necessary to join a crew in order to obtain employment.

Records show that in the 1952 contact program in Florida, 485 crew leaders were contacted at 17 different points and 24,474 workers were signed up for employment in 8 Atlantic Coast States; 455 for work in South Carolina, 6,686 for work in North Carolina, 12,052 in Virginia, 6,391 in Maryland, 2,166 in Delaware, 4,384 in Pennsylvania, 3,101 in New Jersey, and 9,837 in New York.[4]

Timing of the Movement

Harvest labor needs in Atlantic Coast States frequently overlap, especially in spring and summer (fig. 2). For example, the early season demand for strawberry pickers in Virginia began in 1952 while the workers were still needed in Florida. As a part of the interstate cooperative agreement, State employment offices in the coastal States agree to do no recruiting in Florida until the peak of the harvest is over. Local offices in Florida are permitted to designate the date when crews signed up under preseason commitments may be recruited for out-of-State employment.[5] In 1952, the Belle Glade office held up recruitment for out-of-State movement until May 12 when the heavy local demand for workers in snap beans and sweet corn began to slacken. The early season demand was for strawberry pickers in the Eastern Shore area of Virginia and Maryland. The heavy outward movement to the potato and snap bean areas of North Carolina began a week later. By the first of June, the chief movement was to the fruit and vegetable areas of New York and the potato area in New Jersey. Practically the entire movement from Florida was over by June 26.[6]

Often a lull occurs in the annual cycle of harvest activities. In October, labor needs usually begin to slacken in New York and other northern coastal States. Harvest operations in fall apples and beans in these States begin to require fewer workers. But in Florida work does not begin on any large scale until December. Officials of Federal farm placement services point out to the farmers the availability of workers in late fall and recommend the planting of fall beans and other crops that come to maturity when employment is slack. Also, leaders of migratory crews are encouraged to look for fall job opportunities on their way south.

[4] Unpublished data from Farm Placement Service, Bureau of Employment Security, U. S. Department of Labor, Washington.

[5] Timing of crew movements from Florida is made possible by the Florida emigrant agent law (*1*), which was passed in order to stop untimely and indiscriminate recruiting of workers by labor agents representing Atlantic coast employers. This law provides heavy penalties on "any person, firm, or corporation engaged in hiring laborers, or soliciting emigrants in this State, to be employed beyond the limits of this State" without having secured a license at a minimum cost of $1,500 a year, for each county in Florida in which he operates. State and Federal agencies are exempted from the provisions of this statute, hence crew leaders who cooperate with the public agencies are permitted to operate without an emigrant agent license.

[6] Information supplied by Belle Glade office, Florida State Employment Commission.

Defense Manpower Policy No. 10, issued by the Office of Defense Mobilization on November 29, 1952, assigned to Federal agencies the following manpower responsibilities:

A. Meet . . . seasonal labor requirements by the fullest possible employment and utilization of local labor.

B. Provide the greatest possible continuity of employment and income . . . for migratory workers.

E. Develop greater cooperation among employers, workers, and other private groups and appropriate public agencies in recruiting and making full use of seasonal agricultural workers.

Plans for a survey of migratory workers on the Atlantic coast were formulated in accordance with the responsibilities set forth in this statement of policy. Representatives of the former Bureau of Agricultural Economics and of the Bureau of Employment Security cooperated in developing plans and procedures. The general objectives may be summarized as follows:

1. To ascertain the extent to which the manpower potential of migratory farmworkers located in Florida during the winter, was utilized during the 1952 crop season.
2. To determine the paths of movement of these migratory farmworkers in 1952, and to ascertain the periods during which these workers were unemployed and their availability for employment during the 1952 season.
3. To ascertain the wages and earnings of Atlantic coast migratory workers during the 1952 season.
4. To ascertain by objective measures the extent of use of the system of preseason arrangements that has been developed for migratory farmworkers on the Atlantic coast and to determine its effects on fuller utilization of workers' time.[7]

These objectives were oriented to the defense program current at the time. But the need for information of this type varies only in intensity; such information is a function of a continuing attack on a continuing problem.

A study of the extent of utilization of migratory workers on the Atlantic coast was regarded as particularly appropriate in view of the fact that a concerted effort had been made to systematize the movement of workers along the coast for the last several years. Data supplied by the Bureau of Employment Security pointed toward the Belle Glade area in Palm Beach County, Fla., as having the greatest concentration of Atlantic coast workers in winter. Many coastal migrants made their homes in this area, and others moved to it for the peak of the snap bean harvest in March and April.

Firsthand examination of the Belle Glade area showed that an estimated 25 percent of the migratory workers lived in 3 large camps, Camps Okeechobee (fig. 3), Everglades, and Canal Point. These camps were established by the Farm Security Administration but are now administered by local public housing authority units.

The rest of the migratory workers lived in the Negro residential areas of Belle Glade, Pahokee, and South Bay, and in scattered settlements elsewhere in the area.

[7] From cooperative work plan developed at a meeting of representatives of the former Bureau of Agricultural Economics and the Bureau of Employment Security.

The survey area was limited to the 3 camps, plus the areas of concentrated Negro population in the 3 cities. The sample group was also limited to continental domestic migratory workers; hence, nonmigratory farmworkers, Puerto Ricans, and imported British West Indian laborers living in the survey area were excluded from the study.[8]

The field survey was made by a local group of interviewers between February 23 and March 14, 1953. Approximately 35 percent of the households in the camps and 34 percent in the town areas contained 1 or more persons who had engaged in migratory farmwork at some time during the previous 12 months.

In the course of the interviews, it was observed that some migratory workers had not followed the usual migration patterns. Many of these people had come to Florida for the first time in the winter of 1952–53,

FIGURE 3.—Camp Okeechobee at Belle Glade is the "home base" for many Atlantic coast workers. The metal shelters shown above are used by the most transient types of workers.

either to enter the migrant stream or to engage in local farmwork. Others had cotton farms in Georgia or Alabama and had come to Florida for several years past to work in the vegetable harvest during the slack season on their own farms. These workers were treated separately in the tabulation; they are designated as "migrants to Florida."

The sampling rate used in the camps was 3.3 times as high as that used in the town areas. Hence, in arriving at totals for the tables in this report, all data obtained in the towns were multiplied by 3.3. (See section on sampling, p. 77.)

In reporting the results of the survey, the problem arose as to use of occupational and employment terminology. Disagreement was found as to the proper definition of such terms as migratory, crew, crew leader, freewheeler, and availability for work. The sense in which these and similar terms are used in this report is therefore set forth in the appendix, page 76.

[8] A more detailed statement of sampling and survey procedures is included in the appendix.

CHARACTERISTICS OF WORKERS

Ensuing sections of this report deal almost entirely with data obtained from the persons contacted in the field survey. But the results should apply generally to workers in the Atlantic coast migratory stream, particularly as to paths of migration, types of work done, and extent of employment. The Belle Glade area is such an important point in the migratory stream that workers located there in winter may be assumed to be representative of a high percentage of the whole migratory farm labor force on the Atlantic coast.

Household Composition

The sample included migratory workers from two different groups: Workers living in labor camps, and workers living in areas of concentrated Negro population in cities. Workers in labor camps ordinarily were in family groups, which generally were small but ranged up to 13 persons. Among the camp residents interviewed, households averaged 4.1 persons (table 1). In the city areas occupied by Negroes,

TABLE 1.—*Characteristics of households containing migratory workers, Belle Glade area, Fla., March 1953* [1]

Characteristics	All households	Atlantic coast migrants		Migrants to Florida [2]
		Town residents	Camp residents	
	Number	*Number*	*Number*	*Number*
Total households	673	455	148	70
Total persons in households	1, 866	1, 066	608	192
Persons per household	2. 8	2. 3	4. 1	2. 7
Total migratory workers in households	1, 285	779	376	130
Migratory workers per household	1. 9	1. 7	2. 5	1. 9
Households with—				
Male heads [3]	473	343	92	38
Female heads	149	86	39	24
	Percent	*Percent*	*Percent*	*Percent*
Percentage with female heads	24	20	30	39
Households of—				
1 person	31	38	9	31
2 persons	31	30	28	42
3 or 4 persons	22	20	32	14
5 or 6 persons	9	9	14	3
7 or 8 persons	5	3	10	3
Over 8 persons	2	0	7	7
	100	100	100	100

[1] Camp areas were sampled more heavily than were residential areas in the towns. Hence, all data from the town sample were multiplied by 3.3 in order to give them equal weight with the camp sample. See section on sampling.

[2] Workers who did not participate in the Atlantic coast migration but who came to Florida from another State to do farmwork.

[3] Some households, as defined in this survey, had no head, for example, when 2 or more single workers lived together.

buildings were not adapted to large family groups and average size of household was only 2.3 persons. According to the 1950 census, the average size of Negro households in Florida was 3.7 persons, ranging from 3.4 in urban areas and 3.6 in the rural-nonfarm population to 4.4 in the rural-farm population. Hence, household size in urban areas was considerably below average for the State. More than a third of the households in the survey towns and cities (38 percent) consisted of 1 person only, and almost another third of 2 persons. The rest were made up of families with children. In contrast, the proportion of 1-person households in the camps was less than one-fourth as great as in the towns.

The proportion of households in which a woman was head was noticeably high. In the downtown areas only 20 percent of the households had female heads, but 30 percent of the households in camp and almost 40 percent among the special group of migrants to Florida were headed by females. In some households, particularly in the downtown areas where 2 men or 2 women roomed together, neither was willing to designate himself, or herself, as head. For purposes of this survey, however, the two occupants were classed as a single household.

Sex Distribution

Males and females were represented about equally in migratory households as a whole, but this even division did not exist in the two separate parts of the sample (table 2). There were slightly more men than women in the town residential areas and a higher proportion of women in the camps.

Classification by sex of those persons who did migratory farmwork was similar to the pattern for the entire group, although females were somewhat less numerous than males. Women in town were least inclined to do migratory farmwork. They constituted only 44 percent of the workers from the towns. But women and girls in camps made up 52 percent of the migrants and about the same percentage of the population.

Age Composition

An outstanding personal characteristic of the migrant groups, both in towns and in camps, was the small number of persons in the older age groups. Only 2 percent of town residents and 1 percent of camp residents were over 65, as compared with 8 percent in the population of the United States as a whole (table 3). The proportion in the age groups 45 to 54 and 55 to 64 was also significantly less than for the country as a whole. People over 45 constitute 29 percent of the total population in the country, but they constituted only 14 percent of the people in these migratory households.

No information was obtained as to why there were so few older people in this group. The proportion of persons over 64 in the nonwhite population in the United States in 1950 was 5.7 percent, and the proportion in the nonwhite population of Florida was also 5.7 percent. So the racial factor accounts for only a small part of the difference. The data appear to indicate that the older people moved out of the migratory agricultural labor force. There is also a possibility that they may have moved out of Florida.

An additional characteristic of the survey households was the high proportion of children and youth in the camp population.

TABLE 2.—*Percentage of all persons and of migrants in migratory households who were males, Belle Glade area, Fla., March 1953*

Age group	All persons	Percentage who were males			
		All persons	Households of Atlantic coast migrants		Households of migrants to Florida
			Town residents	Camp residents	
	Number	*Percent*	*Percent*	*Percent*	*Percent*
All persons	1, 866	50	52	48	49
Under 14	556	49	47	52	44
14–19	242	51	47	54	50
20–24	190	52	55	34	63
25–34	317	50	55	40	33
35–44	305	42	40	44	54
45–54	159	65	75	46	63
55–64	67	66	74	43	50
65 and over	30	47	35	62	0

Age group	All migrants	Percentage who were males			
		All migrants	Atlantic coast migrants		Migrants to Florida
			Town residents	Camp residents	
	Number	*Percent*	*Percent*	*Percent*	*Percent*
All persons	1, 285	53	56	48	50
Under 14	86	48	47	55	17
14–19	217	52	50	55	50
20–24	163	55	59	34	63
25–34	302	51	57	40	33
35–44	280	45	43	46	58
45–54	154	65	74	48	63
55–64	63	70	78	42	50
65 and over	20	60	54	71	0

Approximately 57 percent of the people in the camps were under 20, as compared with 33 percent in the country as a whole. This difference did not exist in the town population, in which the proportion of persons under 20 was also 33 percent.

Persons in the sample who did migratory farmwork were quite young as compared with workers in the United States generally. The results were strikingly similar to those in the population comparison above. Only 2 percent of the workers in the sample group were over 64, as compared with 11 percent in the farm labor force and 4 percent in the nonfarm labor force of the United States (*12*). Only 7 percent of the migratory workers in the Florida sample were

TABLE 3.—*Age composition of persons in migratory households, and of those 14 and over who did migratory farmwork, Belle Glade area, Fla., March 1953, compared with age composition of United States population and labor force*

Age group	All persons		Persons in each age group					United States population [1]
			Atlantic coast migrants				Migrants to Florida	
			Town residents		Camp residents			
	Number	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*	*Percent*	*Percent*
All persons in migratory households	1, 866	100	1, 066	100	608	100	100	100
Under 14	556	30	247	23	239	40	38	25
14–19	242	13	112	10	101	17	15	8
20–24	190	10	133	12	38	6	10	8
25–34	317	17	215	20	80	13	11	16
35–44	305	16	198	19	80	13	14	14
45–54	159	8	92	9	48	8	10	12
55–64	67	4	49	5	14	2	2	9
65 and over	30	2	20	2	8	1	0	8
								United States labor force [2]
								Farm / Nonfarm
Persons 14 and over who did migratory farmwork	1, 199	100	743	100	338	100	100	100 / 100
14–17	121	10	50	7	59	18	10	10 / 3
18–19	96	8	43	6	36	11	14	4 / 3
20–24	163	14	112	15	32	9	17	6 / 10
25–34	302	25	208	28	72	21	18	17 / 25
35–44	280	23	182	24	74	22	21	18 / 24
45–54	154	13	89	12	46	14	17	18 / 19
55–64	63	5	46	6	12	3	3	16 / 12
65 and over	20	2	13	2	7	2	0	11 / 4

[1] Data from U. S. Census of Population: 1950 (*11*).
[2] Data from Annual Report on the Labor Force, 1952 (*12*).

over 54, as compared with 27 percent in the farm labor force and 16 percent in the nonfarm labor force of the country as a whole.

At the other end of the age scale, 18 percent of all migratory workers surveyed and 29 percent of those in camps were under 20. In 1952, only 14 percent of all workers in agriculture and 6 percent of all those in nonfarm employment were under 20.

Educational Attainment

Average level of educational attainment in the survey households was significantly less than that of nonwhite people in the country generally. Median years of school completed by those in survey households was 4.8 years (table 4). In 1952 that of nonwhites in the United States as a whole was 7.7 years and of those in Florida, 5.8 years. The educational handicap was not entirely associated with migratory living. Newly arrived migrants to Florida had an average of only 5.5 years of formal education.

The range in educational attainment among these people was very great. Fourteen percent had not gone past the second grade, approximately a third had left school after the third or fourth grade, and another third after the fifth, sixth, or seventh grade. Approximately 20 percent had completed grade school and 11 percent had gone on to high school. But those who went to high school usually dropped out during the first year.

The wide range in educational attainment among these people is closely associated with differences in age. Older people had significantly less schooling than those in the younger age groups. Seventy percent of persons 45 years old and over had not gone past the fourth grade. Only 20 percent of the youth 14 to 19 years of age had not gone past this grade. Only 5 percent of the older group had gone past the eighth grade, as compared with 29 percent in the younger group.

The influence of the age factor is apparent in three other comparisons that can be made in regard to the educational attainments of these people. First is the higher grade level attained by those in camps as compared with those in towns; second, the higher grade level of the migrants to Florida; and third, the lower educational attainment of migratory workers as compared with nonmigratory persons. Other factors besides age doubtless entered into the years of formal schooling obtained by people in these groups, but the grades they attained meet closely the expectancy that arises from the age classification.

Persons Who Did Migratory Farmwork

Workers were classed as migratory when they had done farmwork in more than 1 county during the last 12 months, unless there had been a corresponding change of residence. This line of distinction was easy to follow as most workers classified as migratory had been employed outside the State. But one group of workers who did not conform to the usual pattern was included as migrants. Instead of moving north with the harvests and returning in the fall, these people had moved from Georgia or some other State to Florida during the preceding year. In a few instances this may have been merely a change in location rather than a case of following crops across State lines.

TABLE 4.—*Educational attainment of persons in migratory households, by residence, age, and family status, Belle Glade area, Fla., March 1953*

Group	All persons reporting		Years of school completed				Median years completed	
			0–4 years	5–7 years	8 years	More than 8 years	Survey group	Nonwhite population, United States [1]
	Number	*Percent*	*Percent*	*Percent*	*Percent*	*Percent*	*Years*	*Years*
All persons reporting [2]	1,278	100	43	37	9	11	4.8	7.7
Atlantic coast migrants	1,155	100	42	39	8	11	4.4	
By residence:								
Town	779	100	47	35	9	9	4.3	
Camp	376	100	38	42	8	12	4.8	
By family status:								
Male heads of households	443	100	60	25	6	9	3.5	
Other males 16 and over	100	100	23	41	15	22	4.9	
School males under 16	45	100	42	54	2	2	4.5	
Nonschool males under 16	14	100	50	50	0	0	4.0	
Female heads of households	147	100	40	39	14	7	5.1	
Other females 16 and over	339	100	29	47	9	15	4.8	
School females under 16	46	100	26	63	7	4	5.6	
Nonschool females under 16	21	100	67	24	9	0	4.5	
Migrants to Florida	123	100	34	42	8	16	5.5	
All migrants:								
By age groups:								
Under 14	138	100	52	44	4	0	3.9	
14–19	220	100	20	43	8	29	6.5	9.2
20–24	162	100	29	46	10	15	5.1	9.9
25–44	551	100	44	38	11	7	4.5	8.3
45 and over	207	100	70	22	3	5	3.5	5.3

[1] Data from Current Population Reports (*13*).

[2] No report was made as to grade for 588 persons covered in the survey. Nearly all these people were nonmigrants, many of whom had not yet attended school.

Of 1,866 persons covered in the survey, 1,285, or more than two-thirds, did some migratory farm work in the last year; this was almost three-fourths of the people living in the households in the town area and about three-fifths of those living in camp households (table 5, fig. 4). A higher percentage of male than of female members of the survey households did migratory farmwork. Seventy-two percent of the males were classified as migratory farmworkers, as compared with 65 percent of the females.

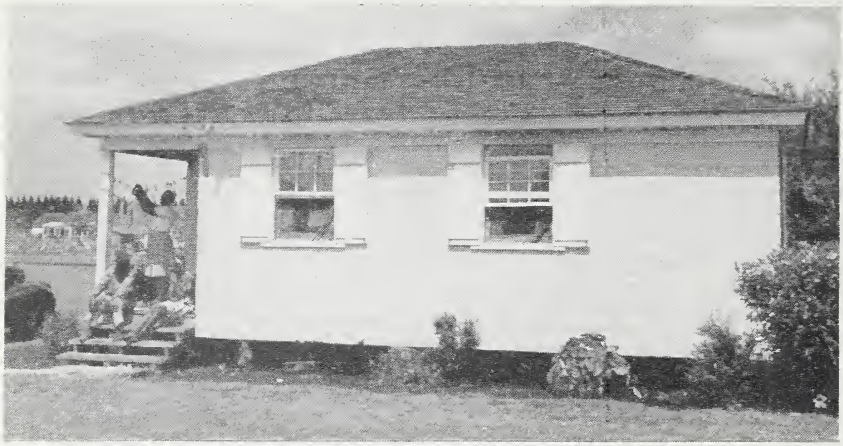

FIGURE 4.—Farmworkers who expect to remain at Camp Okeechobee for any length of time try to move into the better types of housing. They often retain their contracts for such homes even while on the annual trip north.

The proportion of all persons in the survey households who did migratory farmwork varied significantly with age. More than 90 percent of those between 25 and 65 years of age followed the crops from State to State. The proportion in the age group 14 to 24 was only slightly less. Migration was less common among workers over 65; only two-thirds of them did migratory farmwork. Similarly, only 16 percent of the children under 14 were classed as migrants. All but a few of these young workers were more than 10 years of age.

Persons Who Did No Migratory Farmwork

Among those who did no migratory farmwork, 61 percent were children under 10, 13 percent were youths over 10, 8 percent were wives—usually in the younger age groups—and 18 percent were parents, grandparents, and other relatives (table 6).

A few households contained persons who worked at nonfarm employment and remained in Florida when other members of their families went north. But of the 581 nonmigrants, only 20 had been in the labor force during the year. Twelve of these were wives, 6 were youths over 16, and 1 was head of a household.

Of the 581 persons who did no migratory farmwork, more than two-thirds traveled with the migratory workers in the family. Of the 354 children under 10 in the nonworker category, only 62 did not travel with their parents.

TABLE 5.—*Percentage of persons in survey households who did migratory farmwork during previous 12 months, Belle Glade area, Fla., March 1953*

Group	All persons	Persons who did migratory farmwork	Percentage of persons	
			Who did migratory farmwork	Who did not do migratory farmwork
	Number	*Number*	*Percent*	*Percent*
All persons	1, 866	1, 285	69	31
By residence: [1]				
Town	1, 066	779	73	27
Camp	608	376	62	38
By type of migrant:				
Atlantic coast migrants	1, 674	1, 155	69	31
Migrants to Florida	192	130	68	32
In households of—				
1 person	207	207	100	0
2 or 3 persons	679	571	84	16
4 or 5 persons	433	259	60	40
6 and over	547	248	45	55
By sex:				
Male	940	680	72	28
Female	926	605	65	35
By age groups:				
Under 14	556	86	16	84
14–19	242	217	90	10
20–24	190	163	86	14
25–34	317	302	95	5
35–44	305	280	92	8
45–54	159	154	97	3
55–64	67	63	94	6
65 and over	30	20	67	33

[1] Does not include migrants to Florida.

The statement, frequently made, that children come home ahead of their parents in order to enter school was not borne out by the survey data. Of 404 children and youths about whom information was obtained, 399 traveled with their parents all of the time. Some whole families may have returned in order to place children in school, but the number was small as 87 percent of the schoolchildren returned to Florida in October, November, or later.

Crew Membership

As previously indicated, most migratory workers are recruited by crew leaders. Crews ordinarily disband each year after the trip north, as most hiring for farmwork in the Belle Glade area is done by farmers or their agents on a day-haul basis. Each spring the crew leader reorganizes his crew or recruits a new one. Some workers do not join crews. They may have developed work contacts of their own or they may prefer to look for their own jobs. Still others wish to leave Florida at an earlier date than that agreed upon by employ-

TABLE 6.—*Persons who did no migratory farmwork in the preceding 12 months: Family status, major work status, and migratory status,*[1] *Belle Glade area, Fla., March 1953*

Family status	Total persons	Major work status [2]		Went with migratory workers in family		
		In labor force	Not in labor force	All of the time	Part of the time	None of the time
	Number	*Number*	*Number*	*Number*	*Number*	*Number*
All persons	581	20	561	391	14	169
Male heads	9	1	8	----	----	8
Female heads	5	----	5	3	----	2
Wives	45	12	33	20	----	24
Youths 16 and over	27	6	21	6	----	21
Youths 10–16	50	0	50	37	1	12
Youths under 10	354	0	354	285	4	62
Other	91	1	90	40	9	40

[1] Residents of camp and town are combined as there were no appreciable differences between the 2 as to migratory status.
[2] For major part of year.

ment service officials. These workers go out either as individuals or in family groups.[9]

About two-thirds of the migratory workers went north as crew members in 1952 (table 7). Almost three-fourths of the workers in the camps had signed up with crews, as compared with 64 percent of those in town. Workers classified as migrants to Florida, however, usually came down in family groups; only 35 percent were members of crews.

Crew membership is roughly related to participation in the program of preseason commitments of workers along the Atlantic coast. But it would be impossible to say from these data that two-thirds of the workers surveyed participated in the commitment program. Florida laws in effect make it compulsory for crew leaders who take workers out of the State to clear with the State employment service. But apparently this is not always done.[10]

State of Origin

Approximately three-fourths of the migratory workers were born in States other than Florida (table 8). More than half came originally from Georgia. The rest came from widely scattered areas in the Southeast. The proportion from any other 1 State was relatively small, with 8 percent from Alabama and 6 percent from South Carolina the largest.

Among the migrants to Florida during the year preceding the interviews, most came from Georgia (59 percent) but a considerable

[9] There is no distinct dividing line between families and small crews, so an arbitrary distinction was drawn. Enumerators were told not to regard a family group as a crew unless there was at least one nonfamily person in the group.
[10] See explanation of Florida emigrant agent law on page 7 of this report and the count of employment-service registrations on page 7.

TABLE 7.—*Percentage of migratory workers who were members of crews at the time they left Belle Glade area, Fla., 1952 season*

Group	All workers reporting [1]	Migratory workers who were members of crews	
		Crew members	Percentage of total
	Number	*Number*	*Percent*
All workers	1, 155	772	67
By residence:			
Town	779	495	64
Camp	376	277	74
By type of worker:			
Male heads of households	459	297	65
Other males, 16 and over	103	85	82
School males under 16	42	30	71
Nonschool males under 16	11	8	73
Female heads of households	129	92	71
Other females, 16 and over	355	214	60
School females under 16	43	37	86
Nonschool females under 16	13	9	69
By year worker started doing migratory farmwork:			
Prior to 1935	34	13	38
1935–39	124	59	48
1940–44	299	185	62
1945–49	393	279	71
Since 1949	244	189	77
Year not given	47	41	87

[1] Does not include migrants to Florida.

number, 15 percent, came from Arkansas. This movement from Arkansas, along with a smaller percentage from Mississippi, may indicate that workers now come to Florida from greater distances. Such movements between States in the South are encouraged through agreements between State employment services.

Approximately 70 percent of the workers who came from other States first came in during or since World War II (table 9). Heaviest first immigration took place from 1940 to 1944. This was a time of significant readjustment in manpower. Apparently the workers had responded to calls for help from Florida employers and labor recruiters. Only 13 percent of the workers came in before 1935. Residents of camps came to Florida slightly earlier than those living in town.

Most of the migrants to Florida originally came to the State before 1952, but two-thirds came after 1949. About a fifth had come to Florida during World War II. All of these migrants would appear to be new entrants into Florida agriculture who had decided up to the present against moving northward in summer with the crop harvests.

Year Started Doing Migratory Farmwork

The year in which most workers started doing migratory farmwork was significantly more recent than the year they moved to Florida. Apparently the usual pattern was to move to Florida and to work

TABLE 8.—*State of origin of migratory workers, Belle Glade area, Fla., March 1953* [1]

State of origin	Migratory workers from each State		Atlantic coast migrants				Migrants to Florida	
			Town residents		Camp residents			
	Number	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*
All States	1,285	100	779	100	376	100	130	100
Georgia	664	52	383	49	204	54	77	59
Florida	339	26	238	31	101	27	0	0
Alabama	101	8	69	9	22	6	10	8
South Carolina	79	6	46	6	28	8	5	4
North Carolina	23	2	7	1	11	3	5	4
Arkansas	26	2	3	(2)	4	1	19	15
Mississippi	11	1	3	(2)	1	(2)	7	5
All other States	42	3	30	4	5	1	7	5

[1] Based on State of residence immediately preceding time worker *first came* to Florida.
[2] Less than 0.5 percent.

TABLE 9.—*Period when migratory workers first came to Florida, by type of migrant and residence, Belle Glade area, March 1953*

Period came to Florida	Migratory workers who came to Florida during each period		Atlantic coast migrants				Migrants to Florida	
			Town residents		Camp residents			
	Number	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*
Total migratory workers	1,285		779		376		130	
Born in Florida	339		238		101		0	
Total who came to Florida	917	[1] 100	525	[1] 100	262	[1] 100	130	[1] 100
Prior to 1930	73	8	43	8	28	11	2	1
1930–34	47	5	30	6	15	6	2	1
1935–39	153	17	92	17	56	21	5	4
1940–44	272	30	172	33	73	28	27	21
1945–49	187	20	122	23	60	23	5	4
Since 1949	185	20	66	13	30	11	89	69

[1] Of migratory workers who reported year of entry only.

TABLE 10.—*Period when workers began doing migratory farmwork, Belle Glade area, Fla., March 1953*

Period	Workers who started doing migratory farmwork							
	All migrants		Atlantic coast migrants				Migrants to Florida	
			Town residents		Camp residents			
	Number	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*
All migrants	1, 285		779		376		130	
Total reporting year started migrating	1, 238	[1] 100	759	100	349	100	130	100
Prior to 1930	15	1	6	1	7	2	2	2
1930–34	21	2	13	1	8	2		
1935–39	129	10	96	13	28	8	5	4
1940–44	311	25	195	26	104	30	12	9
1945–49	415	34	287	38	116	33	12	9
Since 1949	347	28	162	21	86	25	99	76
Time not given	47		20		27			

[1] Percentage excludes 47 who did not give year they started doing migratory farmwork.

there for several years before moving into the Atlantic coast migratory stream. Very few workers said they had done any migratory farmwork before coming to Florida.

In general, most of the migratory farmworkers had followed the harvests for a short time only. More than 60 percent began after 1945 (table 10). Only 13 percent had begun before 1940 and only 3 percent before 1935. This is surprising as migration up the Atlantic coast before World War II was almost as heavy as that following the war. Turnover during the war period was evidently heavy.

More than three-fourths of the 130 migrants to Florida indicated that they began doing migratory farmwork after 1949. Actually, most of this latter group first started to migrate during the 12 months preceding the survey. Hence, their recent move to Florida often represented their only migratory activity.

Workers With Town Employment

All workers interviewed were asked whether they had done any work "in town" during the previous 5 years. Among males, about 1 in 3 reported such nonfarmwork, as compared with about 1 female in 6 (table 11). Workers living in towns had engaged in nonfarmwork more frequently than those living in camps. The difference was especially great in the case of boys and young men. Only 3 percent of the boys under 16 in camps had done any nonfarmwork, as compared with 15 percent of those living outside the camps.

TABLE 11.—*Percentage of migratory farmworkers who had done some nonfarmwork during the last 5 years, Belle Glade area, Fla., March 1953*

Group	Total reporting	Percentage who did some nonfarmwork in the last 5 years			
		All groups	Atlantic coast migrants		Migrants to Florida
			Town residents	Camp residents	
	Number	*Percent*	*Percent*	*Percent*	*Percent*
All migratory workers	[1] 1, 275	25	29	18	17
Males	676	31	36	22	18
Heads of households	501	36	38	31	28
Others 16 and over	118	23	36	16	0
Under 16	57	7	15	3	0
Females	599	18	20	14	15
Heads of households	152	32	30	31	42
Others 16 and over	381	15	19	12	0
Under 16	66	0	0	0	0

[1] 10 persons made no report in regard to nonfarmwork.

Female heads of households had done nonfarmwork in almost the same proportion as male heads. Female heads among migrants to Florida were more commonly employed in nonfarmwork than any other group in the survey.

MIGRATION PATTERNS

Special Circumstances of 1952 Season

In 1952, the movement of seasonal workers along the Atlantic coast was affected by a variety of circumstances. One of these was adverse weather. Unseasonable weather in the Eastern Shore section of Maryland and in adjacent areas resulted in poor yields and crops of poor quality. Some workers avoided the area; others worked there a shorter time than usual. Heavy rains in the Belle Glade area of Florida curtailed labor needs there for the early part of the winter season. Workers who learned of this situation remained in the Northern States somewhat longer than usual, but most of them were unemployed for a considerable period during November and December.

Also affecting the 1952 movement was the national defense situation. Increased military and civilian demands for manpower cut into available supplies of farm labor. A preliminary survey made by the United States Farm Placement Service in the spring of 1951 indicated a possible reduction of 8 percent in the movement between 1950 and 1951. No equivalent survey was made in the 1952 season, so the extent to which the movement up the coast was reduced by the war situation is not known.

The significant point is that farmers in the coastal States, who anticipated a reduced supply of labor, hired workers from Puerto Rico, the British West Indies, Canada, and Mexico. How many such offshore workers were used is not known, as Puerto Rican workers can enter this country without legal formalities. Numbers of offshore and imported workers legally contracted for in coastal States in 1952 were as follows: Florida, 9,688; Georgia, 611; Maryland, 110; Pennsylvania, 5,105; New Jersey, 5,811; and New York, 3,704. Noncontracted Puerto Rican workers were especially numerous in Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey. Canadian workers were employed to help meet peak season needs in New York State. Normal patterns of movement, particularly into some States, were affected by this employment of workers from new sources.

Extent of Movement

Each worker interviewed in the survey was asked to give a detailed location-by-location record of his activities during the last 12 months. This record included dates of arrival and departure, days in each location, days worked there, type of work done, wage rates, and daily and total earnings. The number of locations worked in outside the Belle Glade area in the last 12 months was reported as follows: 1 location by 110 workers, or 9 percent; 2 locations by 534 workers, or 41 percent; 3 locations by 384 workers, or 30 percent; 4 locations by 203 workers, or 16 percent; 5 locations by 47 workers, or 4 percent; 6 locations by 7 workers, or less than 1 percent.

The usual pattern was that these workers had worked in 2 or 3 locations outside the Belle Glade area in the last 12 months, an average of 2.8 locations per worker. Twenty percent had been more migratory; they had worked in 4, 5, or 6 places away from the home-base area. Practically no workers reported the nomadic type of movement that sometimes occurs in the western part of the country.[11]

[11] See Metzler, W. H., and Sayin, A. F. (*6*).

Workers were also asked concerning places to which they had gone but where they had found little or no employment. Only 12 workers reported going to such places, hence they do not add appreciably to the number of locations visited in 1952.

Although these workers made comparatively few stops, they migrated long distances. The most northerly States worked in were New York and Michigan. Approximately 55 percent of the workers migrated that far. The round trip from Florida to these States covers approximately 2,500 miles. About 14 percent went as far north as the Eastern Shore of Virginia or Maryland or to the adjoining States of Delaware, Pennsylvania, or New Jersey, a round-trip distance of from 1,800 to 2,400 miles. Twenty percent went as far north as North Carolina, a round trip of from 1,400 to 1,600 miles. Only 1 percent did not migrate outside Florida. For the entire group surveyed the average distance traveled per person is estimated at approximately 2,000 miles.

Uniformity of the movement was evidenced by the fact that some work areas were mentioned by a high percentage of the workers. Among the more common of these areas were: The Homestead, Fort Lauderdale, and Hastings areas in Florida; the Beaufort and Elizabeth City areas in North Carolina; the Exmore and Norfolk areas in Virginia; the Pocomoke and Princess Ann areas in Maryland; and the Riverhead and King's Ferry areas in New York.

Workers sometimes said they had worked in two or more locations in the same State. This type of movement occurred most often in New York and Florida, which have widely scattered areas that require large numbers of seasonal workers. Numbers and percentages of such workers by States were as follows: New York 78, or 11 percent of those who worked in that State; Florida 73, or 6 percent; Virginia 21, or 7 percent; and North Carolina 21, or 8 percent.

Patterns of Movement

Movements of these workers can be divided roughly into three types. The major movement was from Florida to the North and return. Eighty-nine percent of the workers made this type of movement (table 12). The second type was followed by 10 percent of the workers and included movements from another State, either direct to Florida or over several States and then to Florida. The third type was movement from area to area within Florida. As indicated, this type was comparatively unimportant.

Activities of these workers are not characterized by any great amount of helter-skelter movement covering a large number of States. Of the group that moved north from Florida, half worked in only 1 State outside Florida. One-third more worked in 2 States, 1 in 8 worked in 3 States, and only a handful, 28, worked in 4 States.

New York was the most frequent destination of workers going to 1 other State, possibly because the work seasons in Florida and New York are relatively long and dovetail well with each other. Workers can obtain almost a full year of employment by shifting between these 2 States. The only other State to figure prominently in a 2-State movement was Maryland.

Movement to 2 States outside Florida was reported by 35 percent of the workers, with the most common pattern from Florida to North Carolina, then to New York and back to Florida. New York was

TABLE 12.—*Major migration patterns of workers interviewed by crew status, Belle Glade area, Fla., March 1953*

Pattern of movement [1]	Workers reporting each pattern	Percentage of workers following each pattern	Crew status	
			Workers in crews	Percentage of workers in crews
	Number	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*
All workers	1, 285		786	61
Atlantic coast migrants	1, 143	100	769	67
To 1 State and return	572	50	285	50
New York	275	24	208	76
Maryland	97	9	27	28
Georgia	47	4	0	0
Virginia	41	4	19	46
North Carolina	38	3	22	58
South Carolina	24	2	0	0
New Jersey	23	2	3	13
Delaware	22	2	6	27
Other	5	[2]	[3]	
To 2 States and return	396	35	337	86
North Carolina-New York	133	12	124	93
Virginia-New York	54	5	54	100
Maryland-New York	42	4	31	74
New York-Virginia	20	2	18	90
Virginia-North Carolina	16	1	16	100
South Carolina-Maryland	13	1	13	100
Maryland-South Carolina	13	1	13	100
Other	105	9	68	67
To 3 States and return [4]	147	13	129	88
Virginia-New York-Virginia	61	6	59	97
North Carolina-New York-North Carolina	15	1	15	100
North Carolina-Maryland-New York	14	1	7	50
Maryland-New York-Virginia	10	1	10	100
Other	47	4	38	81
To 4 States and return	28	2	18	64
Migrants to Florida	130	100	17	13
Direct to Florida from	103	79	10	10
Georgia	50	38		
Arkansas	14	11		
Other States	39	30		
To other States and then to Florida from	27	20	7	26
Georgia	11	9		
Other States	16	12		
Inside Florida only	12	1	0	0

[1] Some workers made several moves inside a State. These have not been counted in this tabulation.

[2] Less than 0.5 percent.

[3] Workers in this group did not report on crew status.

[4] A State is counted twice if a worker returned to it after working in another State.

the most commonly mentioned State in these 3-State patterns, while North Carolina, Virginia, or Maryland served as a stopping point on the way north or south.

Movement to 3 other States was reported by 13 percent of the workers. Again New York was usually the northerly point of the trip, and the States worked in on the way north or south were Virginia, North Carolina, or Maryland.

Less than 2 percent of the workers said they had worked in 5 States. Their movements were so diverse that they were not classified into patterns, but they centered in the States mentioned previously.

Migration within Florida alone was not common. Only 1 percent of the migratory workers reported this type of movement and usually this was only to 1 other location in the State. Work in 2 or more places in Florida was more often the pattern of workers who also moved on to other States.

Movement From States Other Than Florida

The present survey was designed to analyze activities of persons who had migrated from Florida to other States. Approximately 10 percent of workers in the sample, however, were persons who had migrated into Florida. Some had been farm operators in Georgia, Alabama, Arkansas, or other States during the early part of the 12-month period. Whether they would return to farming for themselves, remain in Florida, or enter the Atlantic coast migratory stream would probably depend on how well they fared in the new activity. Others had been farmworkers in Georgia, Virginia, New York, or other States in the early months of 1952. They were not asked whether they were originally from Florida and had remained away during the winter of 1951–52.

Most of these workers moved direct to Florida, but a few followed the harvests in summer and came to Florida in fall or winter. Their summer movements were not as regular as those of migrants from Florida; they included trips to such States as Michigan, Missouri, Tennessee, and West Virginia. Almost half of the workers came from Georgia, both those who moved directly to Florida and those who moved from State to State in summer. The next greatest number came from Arkansas, and the rest came from widely scattered areas in the Southeast.

It seems probable that this group constitutes a source of new workers for the Atlantic coast migratory stream. Judging from the age composition of the Atlantic coast migratory group, workers must move out of it at around the age of 45 or 50. Continuation of the movement depends on continual replenishment by new workers. Migrants from low-income farms are ready prospects for crew leaders who recruit workers for the trip north.

Migratory patterns for town and camp residents are not presented separately as they did not vary greatly. Camp residents migrated to New York somewhat more frequently than did workers living in towns. Town residents included Maryland, Virginia, and Georgia in their itinerary to a somewhat greater extent than did migrants from camps. Workers in both groups went to an average of 2.8 States during the year.

Crew Status of Migrants

As previously indicated, two-thirds of the workers who moved north from Florida were members of crews. But the proportion of crew

members varied greatly from one type of migratory path to another. Short-distance migrants ordinarily were not crew members. Those workers who moved from one place to another in Florida or to Georgia or South Carolina moved either as individuals or families. None reported crew membership; nor were many of the workers who moved to Florida from adjacent States crew members.

Workers who migrated to 1 State outside Florida were less likely to be in crews than were those who migrated to several States. Migrants to New York were an exception to this rule. Three-fourths of the workers who migrated only to New York were crew members. Of the migrants who went to 2 States outside Florida, 86 percent were members of crews. Of those who worked in 3 outside States, 88 percent were crew members. In the case of those who worked in 4 States, crew membership dropped to 64 percent. All workers who followed some of the major 3- or 4-State paths were crew members.

Effects of preseason planning are apparent in this situation. Most noncrew workers were either freewheelers or had private arrangements with employers. Ordinarily they moved to only 1 State outside Florida, and usually 1 that was close by. Their movements also were to States outside the regular paths of east coast migration, such as to Georgia, Tennessee, and Alabama. Crew movements were more frequently subject to preseason arrangement; they were largely to 2, 3, or more States of greatest seasonal labor use—New York, Virginia, North Carolina, and Maryland. Apparently harvest work in a combination of States such as Florida, North Carolina, and New York had been fitted together into a planned pattern.

Timing of Movements

As indicated previously, crew leaders abide by the determination of the local State employment office as to the date when they may recruit workers for movement outside Florida. This strongly influences the timing of the movement from the State. Crews in the Belle Glade area were cleared to leave on May 12. Only 9 percent of the workers in the sample group left before May; 85 percent left during May and June (table 13). Only 6 percent left after June. The concerted exodus came between May 12 and June 26.

Some of the workers who left early said they had been members of crews. But crew membership was greater among those workers who left during the regular outmigration period.

The return to Florida was almost as concentrated as the departure from the State. Seventy-eight percent of the workers returned in October and November. Approximately 10 percent came back in September and 9 percent in December. It may be noted that the return date is considerably later than that of the fall opening of schools. This date may have been later than usual in 1952, but it still indicates a need for school attendance by children of migratory workers while they are outside Florida.

On an average, the workers spent more time in Florida than they spent on the road. They were in Florida approximately 200 days, as compared with 155 days on the trip north. They also spent an average of 8 days in travel from one work location to another.

TABLE 13.—*Period migratory workers left and returned to their home base and length of time they were away in preceding 12 months, Belle Glade area, Fla., March 1953*

Period left Belle Glade	Proportion leaving at stated periods		Period returned to Belle Glade	Proportion returning at stated periods		Days away from home	Proportion who were away a given number of days	
	Crew	Noncrew		Crew	Noncrew		Crew	Noncrew
All workers [1]	*Percent* 100	*Percent* 100	All workers	*Percent* 100	*Percent* 100	All workers	*Percent* 100	*Percent* 100
Prior to Apr. 1	1	7	Prior to Sept. 1	(2)	1	Under 50		2
Apr. 1–15	3	6	Sept. 1–15	4	2	50–99	11	10
Apr. 16–30	2	3	Sept. 16–30	5	9	100–124	20	11
May 1–15	15	16	Oct. 1–15	19	13	125–149	36	31
May 16–31	20	16	Oct. 16–31	26	23	150–174	17	21
June 1–15	44	33	Nov. 1–15	21	18	175–199	11	19
June 16–30	9	9	Nov. 16–30	14	21	200–224	3	2
July 1–15	2	4	Dec. 1–15	7	7	225–249	2	1
July 16–31	2	1	Dec. 16–31	2	1	250 and over	(2)	3
After July 31	2	5	After Dec. 31	2	5			

[1] Includes only those workers who migrated up the Atlantic coast.
[2] Less than 0.5 percent.

EMPLOYMENT DURING LAST 12 MONTHS

Irregular employment is a major occupational hazard for seasonal farmworkers. Even when their movements are systematized by State and Federal employment services, many possibilities for loss of time exist. Labor needs in an area may not come up to preseason estimates as adverse weather may delay harvest, reduce the number of workers needed, or shorten the harvest period. The supply of labor also may vary from the usual expectation as freewheelers may either move into a harvest and shorten the period of employment, or they may stay away entirely. Both labor requirements and the supply of labor vary from season to season; they cannot be predicted accurately.

When each worker in the present survey was asked for a complete record of his movements, employment, wages, and earnings in the last 12 months, a location-by-location record was emphasized. If he had lost time in any location, he was asked the duration of this time, the reason for not working, and whether he was available for work during the time he was not employed.

Employment records of workers were traced on the basis of operation performed within each location, rather than on the basis of specific jobs for specific employers. Most workers were members of crews and their job arrangements were made by crew leaders, hence it was expected that they would be unable to tell how many different farmers they had worked for in any given location.[12] So they were asked merely to give the time worked at different operations in a location, such as picking beans or picking up potatoes. The basic unit, then, on which this analysis of employment was built, was the operation-by-operation report for each location in which the workers were employed.

In order to put reports of all workers on a comparable basis, the work year of an adult was figured at 267 days. This figure was arrived at by estimating the average potential workweek at 5¼ days. A 5-day week is standard in most areas, but in some localities work is carried on until noon Saturday; in some operations, and under rush conditions, work may extend to 6 or even 7 days a week. An overall figure on a 5¼-day-week basis, therefore, should approach the average for all crops and all localities. The 267-day work year also allows for 5 holidays, aside from those that come on Saturday or Sunday, and 3 days of travel not made on Saturday or Sunday.

The work year for school youth was figured according to the same formula; it totals 121 days. This was applied only to school youth who gave school attendance as their major activity during the year. Other school youth were usually in school for a relatively short time; they were classified with adult workers. As housewives often dropped out of the labor market during the time their children were in school, it would have been appropriate to calculate their work year at a lower figure than that of other adult workers. But this procedure ran into many exceptions and was abandoned. The 267-day base for these workers is somewhat excessive.

[12] Reports obtained from crew leaders indicated that they had worked for an average of 6.5 different employers during their trip out of Florida. No equivalent data are available for Florida where the day-haul method may mean that a worker is employed by many different farmers.

Average Length of Employment

An average figure for days of employment in the last 12 months is rather meaningless for a group as heterogeneous as the one sampled. Schoolchildren and housewives were not in the labor market for a good part of the year; furthermore, youth and other secondary workers who were in the labor market for the entire year were employed significantly less than heads of households. Average days of employment for all workers in the sample came to 182 (table 14).

When employment data for 121 workers who had been in school the major part of the year are excluded, nonschool workers are shown to have worked an average of 192 days of a possible 267. This means a loss of 75 workdays during the year, or 28 percent of the total. The workers said they were available for work an average of 51 of the 75 days.

Average days worked by town residents, as compared with camp residents, reflects the fact that a much larger proportion of town residents were adults. They averaged 192 days of work, as compared with 169 days for camp residents.

Migrants to Florida were less successful in obtaining work than were workers who migrated up the Atlantic coast. Migrants to Florida had an average of 169 days of work and 92 days of no employment. As there were very few school youth among them, the school factor does not explain this unemployment.

Migrants up the Atlantic coast performed more than half their total days of work in Florida and the rest on the trip out of the State—98 and 84 days, respectively. The average in Florida is practically a total for adult workers, as many of the children were in school while in that State. Migrants to Florida ordinarily did not arrive until late fall. Hence, they had an average of 122 days of work before coming in and 47 days after their arrival.

A more precise picture of the employment of these people can be obtained when they are divided into groups according to age, sex, school attendance, and family status. According to this classification, male heads of households worked an average of 214 days in the last 12 months; female heads of households also had more employment than the average worker—they averaged 185 days. All other groups had less employment than the 182-day average. Male workers 16 years old and over who were not heads of households averaged 175 days; those under 16 who had not been in school averaged only slightly less, 173 days. Female workers in these 2 classifications showed a somewhat different employment pattern. Those 16 and over worked 169 days, or almost as much as the men; but nonschool-girls under 16 averaged only 143 days of work. Girls under 16 apparently were more likely to stay around the home without working (for wages) than were boys.

Schoolboys under 16 averaged 85 days of farmwork during the year; girls averaged only 2 days less. Most of them did little work in Florida but on the trip out of the State they worked with considerable regularity. Apparently children who would have done little or no work on the trip north were left in Florida with friends or relatives (table 6).

The employment pattern may be generalized roughly as follows: Adult workers other than heads of households were employed for around 170 to 175 days during the year. Male heads of households

TABLE 14.—*Employment and unemployment in preceding 12 months; availability for work on days when no work was done, migratory farmworkers, Belle Glade area, Fla., March 1953*

Group	Workers reporting	Average workdays					
		In year [1]	Worked	When no work was done			
				Workdays	Percentage of workdays	Workers were available	
						Workdays	Percentage of workdays
	Number	*Number*	*Number*	*Number*	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*
All workers	1,285	253	182	71	28	48	19
By school status:							
Nonschool [2]	1,164	267	192	75	28	51	19
Inschool	121	121	90	31	26	19	16
By residence: [3]							
Town	779	259	192	67	26	49	19
Camp	376	239	169	70	29	45	19
By type of migrant:							
Atlantic coast migrants	1,155	252	183	69	27	48	19
Migrants to Florida [4]	130	261	169	92	35	47	18
By migrant status:							
In Florida [5]	1,135	152	98	54	36	31	20
On trip north [6]	1,135	105	84	21	20	16	15
Crew	768	100	87	13	13	15	15
Noncrew	367	115	82	32	23	19	17

By type of worker:							
Male heads of households	502	267	214	53	20	44	16
Other males, 16 and over	120	267	175	92	34	52	19
School males under 16	44	121	85	36	30	19	16
Nonschool males under 16	13	267	173	94	35	42	16
Female heads of households	153	267	185	82	31	54	20
Other females, 16 and over	387	267	169	98	37	55	21
School females under 16	45	121	83	38	31	17	14
Nonschool females under 16	21	267	143	124	46	46	17

[1] Total days in year after Sundays, holidays, travel days, and three-fourths of Saturdays are excluded. Averages 267 days for nonschool workers and 121 days for workers with school attendance as major activity. Varies according to proportion of school youth.

[2] Includes 37 workers for whom school attendance was a minor activity.

[3] Migrants to Florida in preceding 12 months not classified by residence.

[4] Migrants to Florida in preceding 12 months, but who did not migrate north last summer.

[5] Includes days worked by Atlantic coast migrants only Average for all workers in Florida was 93 days. 20 workers who worked in other States did not work in Florida.

[6] Includes days worked by Atlantic coast migrants only. Migrants to Florida had worked an average of 122 days before coming to the State, and 47 days after arriving. 20 workers who worked in Florida did not work on the trip north.

averaged almost 40 days more. Nonschoolboys under 16 worked almost as much as adults, other than the head of the house, but nonschoolgirls were less regular in their employment by about 30 days. School youth were employed for half as many days as the usual adult and for only 40 percent as much as the head of the household.

Days When No Work Was Done

As in the case of the figure on average days employed, the corresponding average of 71 days when no work was done has little meaning. Somewhat more meaningful are the averages of 75 days of no work by nonschool and 31 by inschool workers, but classification of workers according to age, sex, and family status gives a more accurate picture. Male heads of households were not employed on 53 days during the year, as compared with 92 and 94 days for other males. Although a few of the latter group lost some time because of school attendance, they appear also to have lost a great deal of time because of lack of familiarity with the labor market, lack of need to work, or from other causes.[13] Figures on days lost by women are considerably higher than those for men. They are discussed in connection with data on availability of women for other work as they were usually doing housework when they were not working for wages.

Reasons For Days of No Employment

In each location in which the workers lost any time, they were asked to give the reason for the loss, and whether they were available for work during the period of no employment. Reasons given can be divided into two major categories: (1) Those that arose from the personal preference or personal status of the worker, including illness, housework, and resting; and (2) those that arose from external circumstances, such as adverse weather, slack season between harvests, or crop failure.

Workers said that approximately two-thirds of the time lost was due to external causes and almost half to slackness of employment between harvests (table 15). They said that 33 of the 71 days lost during the year came in periods between harvests. Next most common reason was unfavorable weather which caused a loss of 10 days during the year. The workers indicated that 8,257 days had been lost because of illness, an average of 7 days per person during the year. Most of the illness occurred during the trip north.

Actually, several reasons for loss of time sometimes operated together. For example, a worker might become sick during the slack period of the year. In such case the worker was asked to designate the basic longtime reason rather than the additional circumstance that occurred during the period of no employment. Hence, there may have been more days of illness, resting, housework, and unfavorable weather than appear in the report. Crop losses resulted in a longer-than-usual slack season in Florida in the fall. Workers were unable to divide the time between the two causes and generally reported all time lost as due to the slack season. Hence, the number of days lost cannot be stated precisely, because of the unusual rains and crop losses that occurred in Florida in the fall of 1952.

[13] A total of 158 workers spent some time in school, but only 121 gave school attendance as their major activity.

TABLE 15.—*Reasons for not working on workdays on which no work was done, in preceding 12 months, migratory farmworkers, Belle Glade area, Fla., March 1953*

Reason for not working [1]	Total workdays on which no work was done [2]	Percentage of workdays lost that were due to each reason	Average days lost per worker for each reason	Workdays lost on which workers were available for work	Percentage of days lost on which workers were available for work
	Number	*Percent*	*Number*	*Number*	*Percent*
All reasons	91, 749	100	71	48	67
Personal reasons	17, 115	19	14	1	6
Ill or unable to work	8, 257	9	7	0	0
Resting	3, 670	4	3	0	0
Keeping house	5, 188	6	4	1	20
External causes	62, 104	68	48	46	96
Bad weather	13, 160	14	10	10	100
Crop loss	5, 822	7	5	5	100
Slack season	43, 122	47	33	31	94
Other	12, 530	13	9	1	8

[1] When two causes operated at the same time, only the basic reason was reported. For example, during the slack season, days of illness, bad weather, etc., were not recorded; during periods of illness, days of bad weather, crop loss, etc., were not recorded.

[2] Figured on basis of 267 workdays in year for all persons whose major activity was not school attendance and 121 days for those with school attendance as major activity. Workers reported a total of 14,264 days not worked because of school attendance and on which they were not available for work. These have been excluded as workdays lost, hence they do not appear in this table.

A total of 18 workers indicated that illness or disability had taken up the major part of their time during the year. Three of these were men, of whom two were heads of households. All the men were 55 or older. Twelve of the 15 women were wives and all were in the age group 16 to 54. These people worked an average of 82 days during the previous 12 months; they earned an average of $372.

Availability for Work on Days When No Work Was Done

In periods when workers lost time because of external causes they usually were available for other employment, but during periods when loss of time was due to personal reasons they rarely were available for other work. Hence, according to their own estimates, they were available two-thirds of the time when they were not working.

Workers were available for work an average of 48 days when they were not working (table 14). This amounts to approximately 19 percent of their work year. When total days of availability are examined for the various age and sex groups, they do not vary widely.

Male heads of households were available for work 44 days when not working; other adult workers were available 52 to 55 days. Nonschool workers under 16 were reported as available for a somewhat shorter time, 42 to 46 days. The smaller figure may indicate that these workers were regarded as out of the labor market during some

parts of the year. A few were in school for short periods. School youth were available for a comparatively short time, 19 days for boys and 17 for girls.

It may be noted that persons who reported loss of employment because of housework said they were available during 20 percent of the time lost (table 15). Evidently the real reason in such cases was slack season, and housework was done because of lack of other employment.

It should be observed also that approximately a fifth of the time lost when workers said they were available for work was due to unfavorable weather. This is roughly equivalent to 10 of the 48 days; probably it should be regarded as wholly due to natural conditions rather than to any lack of efficient organization of the employment structure. Additional days of unfavorable weather in the slack season would also fall in this category.

Days of No Employment, by States

Almost three-fourths of the workdays lost occurred while the workers were in Florida. Probably days of unemployment were relatively greater in this State than elsewhere because when work slackened in other States the workers returned to their homes in Florida. Hence, it should not be inferred that these figures indicate that employment conditions were less regular in Florida than elsewhere.

Loss of time can be assigned only roughly to the various States in which the migrants worked. According to data available from the survey, the most complete use of these workers' time was achieved in Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Maryland, and New York (table 16). Loss of time was relatively great in South Carolina, Georgia, and New Jersey. Georgia and South Carolina might be classed as home-base States along with Florida and this should account for the somewhat longer period of unemployment there.

Although differences in time losses between States could be due entirely to fortuitous circumstances, they might also reflect some difference in efficiency in handling labor. Workers might go to one State somewhat too early for the harvest, or they might spend a rainy period in one State rather than in another. Yet, greater losses of time might also be associated with such factors as too many workers in relation to harvest needs, poor methods of making contacts between workers and jobs, and similar factors in the organization of the local labor market.

Reasons for loss of time carried on the survey schedule included only such matters as slack season, crop loss, weather, illness, school attendance, and the like. But when labor contractors were interviewed, they indicated that local methods of handling the supply of labor also were a factor. These methods varied by counties and work areas rather than by States. In some areas, particularly those having grower associations, workers were referred from farm to farm and kept rather continuously employed. Community camps with regular placement facilities were also described as helpful in providing regular employment to workers. In other areas, the crew worked for an individual employer and when his harvest was finished, workers did not know who else in the community might need them. They were likely to lose time, either by staying in the community or by going to some other area where they might not be needed. Organization

TABLE 16.—*Number of workers who worked in selected States, average workdays there, average days worked, and average days not worked, migratory workers, Belle Glade area, Fla., March 1953*

State	Workers	Average workdays					
		In each State [1]	Worked in each State	When no work was done			
				Workdays	Percentage of workdays	Workers were available	
						Workdays [2]	Percentage of workdays
	Number	*Number*	*Number*	*Number*	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*
Florida [3]	1, 279	152	93	59	39	31	20
Georgia	145	126	75	51	40	12	10
South Carolina	79	74	41	33	45	13	18
North Carolina	267	48	41	7	15	5	10
Virginia	286	55	43	12	22	9	16
Maryland	246	67	59	8	12	8	12
Delaware	61	79	64	15	19	12	15
Pennsylvania	48	38	34	4	10	3	8
New Jersey	48	90	59	31	34	22	24
New York	699	79	69	10	13	8	10

[1] Total days in State excluding Sundays, holidays, and three-fourths of all Saturdays.
[2] Days on which workers would have worked if they could have found employment.
[3] Excludes workers whose major activity was school attendance. Figures for other States not adjusted for school attendance as differences in totals would be negligible.

of the local labor market is important so far as amount of time lost is concerned. But its importance can be measured only from comparative local studies rather than from statewide averages.

EARNINGS DURING LAST 12 MONTHS

There is need for a figure that will indicate the average or usual earnings of migratory farmworkers along the Atlantic coast. Earnings of these people vary so much from crop to crop and from year to year, and are so greatly affected by variations in yields, field conditions, weather, type of worker, and other factors, that no generally useful average can be set up for them. Earnings reported in this survey apply only to workers in the sample during the 1952 season. Earnings of migratory workers in other areas, and also earnings of other types of workers, might vary considerably from those of this group, depending on the age and sex composition of the group, the crops and areas they work in, and other factors. One possible source of difference lies in the fact that of the present group of workers approximately 80 percent are adults under 45 years of age. Migratory workers in many parts of the country include a large proportion of children.

Two procedures were used in an effort to obtain an accurate report on earnings. First, in connection with each location in which they had worked in the last year, the migrants were asked what operations they had performed, rate of pay, number of days worked, and average amount earned per day in each crop or operation. They were then asked the total amount of money they had earned in that location. The sum of these locational estimates for the year appears in column 2 of table 17. Earnings were also calculated on the basis of days worked and estimated average earnings per day. The latter figure averaged slightly higher than the former, yet it was close enough to indicate that reports of earnings were probably honest and reasonably accurate. This set of figures appears in column 3 of table 17.

Actually, it had been anticipated that the figures in the two series would be farther apart than they were.[14] Workers habitually think of their "good average days" when thinking in terms of averages. They do not give full weight to poor days, parts of days, and other days when they did less than a full day's work. The chance of an upward bias in earnings calculated on a daily basis is so great that earnings on a location-by-location basis are used in this report as more authentic.[15]

Average earnings reported by these workers on a location basis for the 12 months were $908. Their earnings calculated from a daily earnings basis totaled $1,067, a difference of 18 percent. More meaningful figures can be obtained by examining the earnings of separate age, sex, and family status groups. Male heads of house-

[14] The smallness of this difference is due partly to the fact that enumerators were asked to probe for a more exact answer in case there appeared to be any major discrepancy between earnings reported at a location and the sum of earnings per day. Enumerators generally reported that the location-by-location figures were given readily and accurately, especially for work stops during the summer. Estimates of average daily earnings were more difficult to obtain.

[15] The two series are presented concurrently in tables 17 and 18, in the hope that they may afford some clue to the amount of overstatement that may be anticipated to occur in estimates of average earnings on a daily basis. The amount of overstatement was highly consistent.

holds reported an average of $1,169; their calculated earnings were $1,380. Other male workers over 16 reported earnings of $913. Adult female workers earned significantly less, $872 for heads of households and $768 for other workers over 16.

The difference between reported and calculated earnings for adult workers was fairly consistent. But this was not true of estimates of children's earnings. Calculated earnings ranged from 1 to 40 percent above those reported. In the case of girls in school, reported earnings were $285, and calculated earnings were $289. For girls not in school earnings calculated on a per day basis were $406, as compared with reported totals of $291. Apparently the workers were somewhat less careful in "keeping track" of their children's wages than of their own.

Total wages of migrants to Florida and of Atlantic coast migrants were significantly different. The former earned an average of only $684, as compared with $933 for Atlantic coast workers. This is due partly to fewer days of work in the last year, but it is more directly associated with smaller average earnings per day. Earnings in their home States, particularly Georgia and South Carolina, were comparatively low. They averaged $3.59 per day in Georgia and $4 in South Carolina (table 18). Probably the lower earnings in their home States were a strong factor in bringing about their shift to Florida.

Earnings Per Day

Average earnings of migratory workers per day were recalculated to make them consistent with the location-by-location reports. For the preceding 12 months this average was $4.99. Male heads of households exceeded this amount by a considerable margin, while other adult males were only slightly above it. Daily earnings of male heads of households averaged $5.46; other males over 16 averaged $5.22. Male workers under 16 were much less productive. They earned an average of $3.45 per day. Average daily earnings of female workers were approximately 75 cents a day less than those of the men.

Earnings by age, sex, and family status varied so widely that average daily earnings of other groupings of the workers depend to a considerable extent on the proportion of members who were in the various age and sex groups. This is particularly true of average daily earnings on a State basis. In general, employment of women and children was greater in summer, hence their earnings tend to depress averages in States to the north to a greater extent than they do in Florida, Georgia, and other home-base States.

Earnings by States and by Crops

Earnings by States and by crops were also adjusted to make them consistent with the location-by-location reports. The few workers who went to Pennsylvania had the highest earnings per day of workers in any State, $6.59. This amount was boosted by earnings in picking up potatoes at which they made an average of $7.24 (table 18). Earnings in Delaware, New York, and North Carolina exceeded the average for the group as a whole. Lowest average earnings per day were in Georgia, at $3.59, then, in order, came earnings in South Carolina and Virginia.

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TABLE 17.—*Average earnings of migratory farm workers in preceding 12 months, Belle Glade area, Fla., March 1953*

Group	Workers reporting	Earnings for the year		Earnings per day worked		Percentage daily basic earnings are above those reported on a location basis
		From location-by-location reports [1]	From sum of estimates of daily earnings [2]	From reports on a location-by-location basis [1]	Estimated by workers [2]	
	Number	*Dollars*	*Dollars*	*Dollars*	*Dollars*	*Percent*
All workers	1, 285	908	1, 067	4. 99	5. 86	18
By school status:						
Nonschool [3]	1, 164	967	1, 139	5. 04	5. 93	18
Inschool	121	341	373	3. 79	4. 14	9
By residence: [4]						
Town	779	964	1, 151	5. 02	5. 99	19
Camp	376	870	993	5. 15	5. 88	14
By type of migrant:						
Atlantic coast migrants	1, 155	933	1, 099	5. 10	6. 00	18
Migrants to Florida [5]	130	684	781	4. 05	4. 62	14
By migrant status:						
In Florida [6]	1, 135	500	578	5. 10	5. 96	16
On the trip north [7]	1, 135	433	521	4. 98	5. 99	20
Crew [8]	768	446	536	5. 07	6. 09	20
Noncrew	367	406	489	4. 89	5. 89	20

By type of worker:						
Male heads of households	502	1, 169	1, 380	5. 46	6. 45	18
Other males, 16 and over	120	913	1, 017	5. 22	5. 81	11
School males under 16	44	293	348	3. 45	4. 14	19
Nonschool males under 16	13	664	703	3. 84	4. 09	6
Female heads of households	153	872	1, 018	4. 71	5. 50	17
Other females, 16 and over	387	768	917	4. 54	5. 42	19
School females under 16	45	285	289	3. 43	3. 48	1
Nonschool females under 16	21	291	406	2. 03	2. 84	40

[1] Based on reports of earnings on a location-by-location basis.
[2] Based on reports of average earnings per day for each type of work done in each location.
[3] Includes 37 workers for whom school attendance was a minor activity.
[4] Migrants to Florida during preceding 12 months not classified according to residence.
[5] Migrants to Florida during preceding 12 months, but who did not migrate north last summer.
[6] Atlantic coast migrants only. Average earnings of all workers in Florida were $460. 20 migrants did no work in Florida.
[7] Atlantic coast migrants only. Migrants to Florida earned $444 before coming to Florida and $240 after arriving, an average of $5.10 a day and $3.64, respectively. 20 migrants who worked in Florida did no work on the trip north.
[8] At time workers left Florida, hence does not include migrants to Florida who ordinarily were not members of crews.

TABLE 18.—*Employment and earnings of migratory workers in preceding 12 months, in major crops and States, Belle Glade area, Fla., March 1953*

State and crop	Workers	Average days worked[1]	Average earnings[2]		Number of reports[3]
			Per day	Total earnings[1]	
	Number	*Number*	*Dollars*	*Dollars*	*Number*
All workers	1, 285	182	4. 99	908	5, 483
Florida—total	1, 279	93	4. 95	460	2, 894
Beans		39	4. 46	174	1, 553
Corn		30	5. 77	173	307
Celery		45	5. 42	244	242
Mixed vegetables		57	4. 88	278	119
Potatoes		25	5. 44	136	43
Peppers		37	4. 76	176	18
Georgia—total	145	75	3. 59	269	171
Cotton		55	3. 80	209	112
South Carolina—total	79	41	4. 00	164	105
Beans		19	3. 11	59	32
Cotton		32	5. 44	174	29
Potatoes		31	4. 16	129	23
North Carolina—total	267	41	5. 12	210	345
Potatoes		24	5. 71	137	187
Beans		39	4. 18	163	116
Virginia—total	286	43	4. 26	183	472
Beans		29	3. 83	111	243
Potatoes		15	4. 40	66	76
Tomatoes		27	4. 41	119	67
Maryland—total	246	58	4. 57	265	375
Beans		42	4. 45	187	192
Tomatoes		25	4. 44	111	76
Potatoes		30	4. 40	132	62
Delaware—total	61	64	5. 61	359	61
Beans		53	4. 28	227	30
Pennsylvania—total	48	34	6. 59	224	61
Potatoes		17	7. 24	123	24
New Jersey—total	48	59	4. 95	292	50
New York—total	699	69	5. 41	373	892
Beans		58	5. 09	295	547
Potatoes		46	5. 61	258	182
Celery		67	5. 19	348	20

[1] By State and crop.

[2] Average earnings per day were adjusted to make them consistent with reported earnings per location and per year.

[3] Not to be confused with number of workers. A worker may have reported working in more than 1 crop in a State.

Within States, earnings per day at different crops varied widely. Earnings at picking beans, the specialty of these workers, were modest in all States and tended to reduce State averages. In South Carolina, earnings in beans were as low as $3.11; in Virginia, $3.83. New York was highest, $5.09. Earnings at picking up potatoes were always on the high side, but the $7.24 a day in Pennsylvania was exceptional. Potato pickers averaged $5.71 in North Carolina (fig. 5), $5.61 in New York, and $5.44 in Florida.

Average total earnings per State were closely associated with length of stay in the State. More than half of the total amount earned

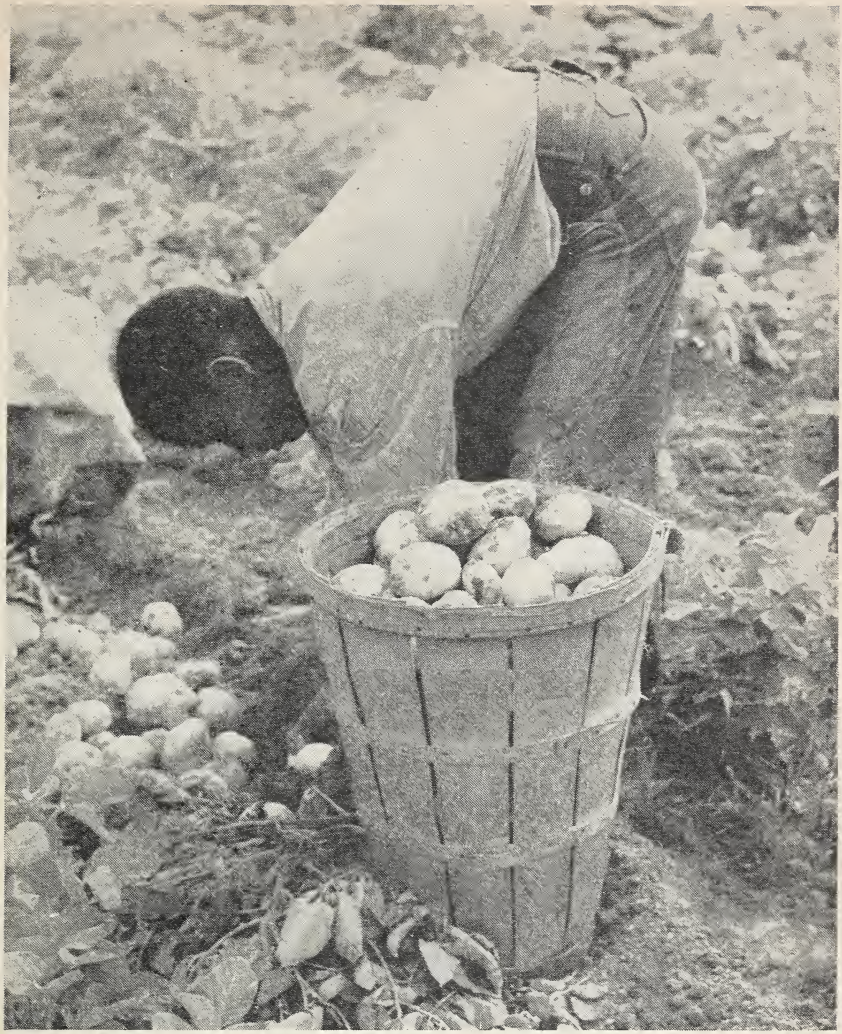

FIGURE 5.—Picking up potatoes provided higher earnings than most jobs. This young potato picker is at work in a field near Belcross, N. C.

during the year was received in Florida. Average earnings in New York and New Jersey were also high because of the comparatively long work season in these States.

Reports by Crew Leaders

A sample of crew leaders was asked how much their workers had made on an average during a week, and how much on the entire trip north. The answers were significantly higher than those given by the workers themselves. Average weekly earnings as estimated by crew leaders were $36, or approximately $6.84 a day. These compare with reports of $26 a week, or $4.99 a day, earned outside Florida, as

given by the workers themselves.[16] Crew leaders estimated average earnings per worker during the trip north at $460. Worker reports had indicated an average of $433. Estimates by crew leaders on a per season basis are not consistent with their estimates on daily and weekly bases. Their estimates, however, were largely offhand judgments. They were not asked to give detailed statements as to wages and earnings, location by location, and crop by crop, as had been asked in the worker questionnaire. This may account partly for the less precise figures they gave.

Earnings Per Household

When earnings were calculated on a household basis, they averaged $1,733. Households in camps had somewhat more workers than those in towns (table 1) and their average earnings were $2,211, as compared to $1,650. Households migrating up the Atlantic coast had higher earnings than those migrating to Florida, $1,788, as compared with $1,266, even though the average number of workers per household was the same.

Number of households with designated earnings was as follows:

	Households	
Earnings:	Number	Percent
Under $1,000	173	26
$1,000–$1,999	264	39
$2,000–$2,999	158	24
$3,000 and over	78	11
Total	673	100

OPERATIONS PERFORMED: SPECIALIZATION

Work done by individuals in the survey was nearly all seasonal. Most of it was in harvesting vegetables and potatoes. This was true in their home States as well as on the road. About 3 percent did some general farmwork while in Florida, and 10 percent more had some type of nonfarm employment. The latter also was often seasonal—in packinghouses and similar plants. A few of the workers contacted were sharecroppers in their home States of Georgia or South Carolina, but in Florida they were seasonal workers.

Beanpicking was the chief seasonal activity engaged in by the workers in Florida (table 18). More than half of the jobs reported in Florida were in the bean harvest. Next most common activities in that State were pulling corn and cutting celery. These three operations are the most common sources of springtime employment in the Belle Glade area. Other operations performed in Florida by a significant number of the workers included picking up potatoes and working in mixed vegetables. These jobs ordinarily were performed in areas outside Belle Glade.

In Georgia, the only operation engaged in by any number of workers was picking cotton. This fact sets Georgia apart from States that draw labor from the Atlantic coast migratory stream. Workers in this stream have ordinarily given up cottonpicking in favor of work in vegetables and potatoes. Cottonpickers surveyed were migrants to Florida rather than up the Atlantic coast. These obser-

[16] The overestimate made by crew leaders in regard to average daily earnings amounted to 27 percent, significantly more than the 18 percent given by the workers.

vations can be applied to a smaller extent to South Carolina. Workers in that State worked in a variety of crops—beans and potatoes as well as cotton.

The first State to the north calling for a large number of the Belle Glade workers was North Carolina, where picking up potatoes was the major operation but where work in beans was also important. Workers generally shifted from one of these labor-competitive crops to the other.

In Virginia and Maryland, workers were employed in a wide range of crops. Work in beans, potatoes, and tomatoes furnished most employment but workers filled in with jobs in strawberries, peppers, and cucumbers.

In New Jersey and Pennsylvania, picking up potatoes was the only activity engaged in by any number of workers. In New York, the crops worked in were highly diverse, with beans and potatoes furnishing the major part of the employment.

The net effect from an examination of the work records of these migrants is to suggest that they were primarily bean and potato pickers, but that they also worked at other similar harvest operations, such as picking tomatoes, pulling corn, or cutting celery. They rarely picked fruit or engaged in any general farmwork. A number were moving over into nonfarmwork, but not at a rapid rate.

Specialization

Employers in Florida and elsewhere often complain that these seasonal workers have become so specialized that they refuse to accept employment outside their preferred crop or operation (fig. 6).

FIGURE 6.—Picking beans was the favored activity of Atlantic coast workers. Here beanpickers wait for the truck to transport them and the product of their day's work, Pahokee, Fla.

Workers in the Belle Glade area were sometimes characterized as beanpickers who were unwilling to do any job that called for heavy labor or for regular day-in and day-out effort. Sugar companies were particularly unsuccessful in attempts to recruit them for work in the cane fields, even in periods of slack employment. When the sugar companies imported foreign labor to handle their farm jobs, local workers made no complaint.

Growers of celery and corn also said they were at a disadvantage in obtaining beanpickers. Apparently the preference is not associated with wage rates or earnings, as workers earned somewhat less at picking beans than at many other farm operations.

Analysis of types of work done in the preceding year by the migrants interviewed indicates that beanpicking was almost a specialty but that other crops were worked in, probably to obtain more employment. Some 1,100 of the migrants picked beans at some time during the year. Yet only 192 workers, or 15 percent, said they had worked only in beans (table 19). An additional 20 workers worked in only 1 crop other than beans, usually potatoes. The total number of workers who worked in 1 crop only was 212, or 16 percent, of the entire group.

TABLE 19.—*Employment and earnings of migratory workers in preceding 12 months as related to specialization, Belle Glade area, Fla., March 1953*

Extent and type of specialization	Workers in each group	Percentage of workers in each group	Average days worked	Average reported earnings
	Number	*Percent*	*Number*	*Dollars*
All workers	1,285	100	182	908
1 crop	212	16	157	696
Beans alone	192	15	155	670
1 other crop alone	20	1	165	953
2 crops	509	40	174	815
Beans and potatoes	140	11	171	799
Beans and 1 other crop except potatoes	269	21	165	765
2 crops, not beans	100	8	201	973
3 crops	304	24	191	955
Beans and 2 other crops	256	20	191	943
3 crops, not beans	48	4	191	1,018
More than 3 crops	260	20	213	1,197
4 crops, any kind	164	13	209	1,158
5 crops, any kind	73	5	225	1,295
6 crops or more	23	2	191	1,156

Workers surveyed commonly had jobs in 2 crops. A total of 40 percent followed a 2-crop pattern. The 2 crops most frequently reported were beans and potatoes, but tomatoes (fig. 7), sweet corn, and celery were also mentioned frequently.

Almost half of the workers were more diversified in their efforts; 24 percent worked in 3 different crops and 20 percent worked in more than 3. From the diversification aspect it should be pointed out that the workers reported employment in 25 different crops and in

many types of nonfarmwork.[17] They also mentioned many kinds of general farmwork such as operating trucks, tractors, and combines, and working as ranch hands and cowboys.

We must conclude from the data that a majority of these workers specialized in 2 or 3 crops rather than 1. They preferred beanpicking, but other harvest operations of a similar nature were also a part of their work pattern. Some workers engaged in a wide variety of operations, but they still have been unwilling to do certain types of work. They were not questioned on this point.

FIGURE 7.—Another of the operations most commonly engaged in by Atlantic coast workers was picking tomatoes. Here a group of workers pause while emptying their buckets, Homestead, Fla.

Preference of crew leaders for specified crops or operations may have been a factor in specialization of workers. The 30 crew leaders sampled were asked whether there were any crops in which they avoided making contracts. More than half, 18, said they would work in any crop in which they could obtain steady employment and a fair return. The number who avoided specific crops, and the reasons given for their avoidance, were as follows:

[17] An idea of the wide range of their operations can be gained by listing the various crops they reported working in. These included: Beans, potatoes, corn, tomatoes, cabbage, cotton, celery, peppers, onions, strawberries, lettuce, carrots, escarole, broccoli, cucumbers, cauliflower, melons, pumpkins, pickles, squash, peas, radishes, eggplant, apples, peaches, cherries, oranges, pecans, tobacco, sugarcane, peanuts, wheat, hay, and ramie.

Crop avoided:	Crew leaders (number)	Reason for avoidance
Potatoes	4	Work too heavy.
Cotton	3	Workers dislike it.
Tomatoes	2	Wet, disagreeable work.
Strawberries	2	Earnings too low, work irregular.
Beans	1	Need too big a crew.
Apples	1	Workers unaccustomed to this work and can't make money.
Tobacco	1	Workers dislike it.

Practically all the reasons point to the fact that crew members objected to doing certain types of work. Possibly the crew leaders tried to shift too much responsibility, but the reasons indicate reluctance by some workers to do certain types of harvest work. Crew leaders felt they had to consider the likes and dislikes of members of their crews or the workers would leave for other crews.

Relationship to Earnings

Specialization by workers in 1 or 2 operations did not pay, either in terms of employment or in earnings for the year. One-crop workers averaged $696; those who worked in 2 crops, $815; those who worked in 3 crops, $955; and those who worked in more than 3 crops, $1,197. This was due partly to the fact that the crop in which there was any amount of specialization was beans, in which earnings generally were below average. Workers who had 1 other crop as a specialty, usually potatoes in which average daily earnings were quite high, still had total earnings of only $953, much below those of nonspecialized workers. Those who worked only in beans or a combination of beans and potatoes had substantially fewer days of employment than more diversified workers. Those who worked in 5 different crops had an average of 70 more days of employment than those who worked only in beans.

Age and sex entered into these differentials to some extent, particularly in Florida. In some families wives and children picked beans while the head of the household had more remunerative employment, such as work in corn, celery, or cabbage. But as a rule, all members of the family engaged in the same type of employment.

Specialization and Mobility

Mobility between crops was positively related to mobility between States. Workers who specialized in 1 or 2 crops were employed in an average of 3.4 States; those who worked in 3 crops were employed in an average of 3.8 States; and those who worked in more than 3 crops were employed in an average of 4.2 States (table 20).

WAGE RATES

Comparison of wage rates in the Atlantic coast work area is difficult because of the different types of rates paid for any single operation. Most rates are on a piecework basis, but type of container used varies from area to area. In harvesting potatoes, 6 different units of measure are used, plus 3 different time units. Rates for harvesting celery and tomatoes vary as greatly. Direct comparisons of rates between areas and between crops must be regarded with some caution. In some areas farmers with poor yields or poor crop conditions change over to day rates; in other areas they increase the piece rate instead.

TABLE 20.—*Specialization of workers related to number of States worked in during previous 12 months, Belle Glade area, Fla., March 1953*

Extent and type of specialization	Workers in each group	States worked in						Average number of States
		2	3	4	5	6	7	
	Number	*Number*	*Number*	*Number*	*Number*	*Number*	*Number*	*Number*
All workers	1,285	110	534	384	203	47	7	3.7
1 crop	212	7	141	40	24	------	------	3.4
Beans alone	192	2	128	39	23	------	------	3.4
1 other crop alone	20	5	13	1	1	------	------	2.9
2 crops	509	72	203	174	57	3	------	3.4
Beans and potatoes	140	5	21	100	14	------	------	3.9
Beans and 1 other crop except potatoes	269	24	142	60	40	3	------	3.5
2 crops, not beans	100	43	40	14	3	------	------	2.8
3 crops	304	24	121	80	56	22	1	3.8
Beans and 2 other crops	256	13	89	78	53	22	1	3.9
3 crops, not beans	48	11	32	2	3	------	------	2.9
More than 3 crops	260	7	69	90	66	22	6	4.2
4 crops, any kind	164	------	52	57	34	17	4	4.2
5 crops, any kind	73	7	16	21	22	5	2	4.1
6 crops or more	23	------	1	12	10	------	------	4.4

In general, in the northern part of the area, wage rates are significantly higher than they are in the southern. But so far as comparison can be made, piece rates appear to be surprisingly uniform throughout the area for specific crops and operations. Variations are apparently as great in any one locality as they are in the Atlantic coast area generally. Widest variation in rates, particularly for picking beans, occurred within the Belle Glade area, rather than between two States.

That rates for a particular operation are at this uniform level probably attests to the fact that the Atlantic coast from Florida to New York has come to be a single labor market. Farmers who employ migratory workers depend pretty largely on the same labor force. Competition for labor has caused farmers to move toward the same level of wage offerings. If they do not do so, workers can easily move to other parts of the area. Possible exceptions are Georgia and South Carolina, neither of which depends greatly on workers from the Atlantic coast migratory stream.

Methods of Establishing Wages

Wage rates varied more in Florida than elsewhere along the Atlantic coast. The greater variability was due partly to the different methods of recruitment and wage determination used there. In the other States, wage rates for a particular job were ordinarily established in an agreement between crew leader and farmer. Prior to this, farmers in a particular area may have arrived at some concensus of opinion as to what the rate for the season should be, but crew leaders were likely to ask for rates that would bring their workers as much as they earned in other areas. Otherwise, crew members might drift to other jobs, crops, or areas where they could earn the amount of money they thought they should have.

Wage determination in Florida was on a different basis. It was part of the day-haul system and the crew leader had no part in it. Individual workers haggled daily with farm operators or their agents as to what the rate should be. The day-haul method was most highly developed in Belle Glade, where a loading platform had been constructed for the convenience of farmers and workers. Each morning farmers or their agents backed their trucks up to the platform on which workers looking for jobs congregated. Farmers frequently showed samples of the beans or other produce to be picked. They indicated what they were willing to pay and the workers looked around for the best offers. When work was slack, offers of 50 or 55 cents a hamper for picking beans might be high enough to obtain all the workers needed. As demand for labor increased, workers were inclined to hold out for better rates. If the demand exceeded the supply, the rate might spiral rapidly. In Belle Glade in 1952 the rate for picking beans rose to 90 cents on one such occasion.[18]

Workers were asked to give the rate they most commonly received for each type of work in each location. They answered readily for all locations except Florida, where varying rates made it difficult to arrive at the rate they usually received.

Wage Rates by States and by Crops

Only the reports on rates for picking beans and potatoes were sufficiently numerous to permit detailed comparison by States. Some minor comparisons of rates for picking tomatoes and cutting celery were attempted. Rates reported for picking beans ranged from 50 to 90 cents per hamper. Rates most commonly reported, however, were 50 or 60 cents. The usual rate in New York, Virginia, Maryland, and North Carolina was 50 cents; in Florida it was 60 cents, with some workers reporting even higher rates (table 21).

The fact that rates reported for picking beans were highest in Florida may call for some explanation. Workers said that picking beans in Florida should call for higher rates as picking operations there are hampered by morning dew, whereas in other States workers could start work early in the morning.

It seems probable too that the day-haul method of hiring may be partly responsible for reports of higher rates in Florida. Workers interviewed were likely to remember the better rates and to overlook the poorer ones. Some spoke of receiving 90 cents for picking beans in the Belle Glade area as though it were the rate for the entire season. Actually the 90-cent rate was paid on only 1 day when the demand for and the supply of workers was badly out of balance. The day-haul method made it difficult for workers to report accurately on the average rate received.

Comparison of rates for picking up potatoes was complicated by different bases of payment from area to area. Furthermore, a straight conversion from one type of unit to another did not always yield comparable results. Hence, all rates were excluded from the comparison, except those for picking on a per 100-pound basis. Fifty-five percent of all payments were of this type. Rates up and down the coast were strikingly similar with 8 cents per 100 pounds the most

[18] A more detailed description of day-haul activities in the Belle Glade area was given by Louis Persch. (See footnote 1, p. 3.)

TABLE 21.—*Rates most commonly reported for major seasonal operations in preceding 12 months, by States, Belle Glade area, Fla., March 1953*

Operation, rate, and unit	Times each rate was reported						
	All States	New York	Virginia	Maryland	North Carolina	Florida	Other States
	Number	*Number*	*Number*	*Number*	*Number*	*Number*	*Number*
Picking beans:							
All workers	2, 242	533	204	189	112	1, 110	94
$0.50 per hamper	1, 055	411	169	136	78	194	37
$0.60 per hamper	784	57	8	32	24	638	25
$0.65 per hamper	57	----	----	----	----	57	----
$0.70 per hamper	156	3	3	----	7	138	5
$0.75 per hamper	23	----	----	----	----	23	----
Other rates [1]	167	32	24	21	3	60	27
Picking up potatoes:							
All workers	597	172	76	62	174	42	71
$0.07 per 100 pounds	73	30	3	7	25	8	----
$0.08 per 100 pounds	210	67	31	32	66	3	11
$0.10 per 100 pounds	48	----	1	3	9	10	25
Other rates [2]	266	75	41	20	74	21	35
Picking tomatoes:							
All workers	181	5	66	76	0	15	19
Under $0.10 per ⅝ hamper	13	----	----	10	----	3	----
$0.10 per ⅝ hamper	18	5	5	6	----	----	2
Over $0.10 per ⅝ hamper	16	----	13	----	----	----	3
Other rates [3]	134	----	48	60	----	12	14
Cutting celery:							
All workers	218	20	----	----	----	198	----
Under $0.60 per hour	20	8	----	----	----	12	----
$0.60 to $0.65 per hour	52	7	----	----	----	45	----
$0.70 to $0.75 per hour	27	2	----	----	----	25	----
Over $0.75 per hour	4	----	----	----	----	4	----
Other rates [4]	115	3	----	----	----	112	----

[1] Other rates include payment per pound, per ⅝ hamper, per hour, and per day; also scattered per hamper and per bushel rates.

[2] Other rates include payment per barrel, per box, per ⅝ bushel, per hour, and per day; also scattered per 100-pound bag rates.

[3] Other rates include payment per bucket, per box, per basket, per hour, and per day.

[4] Other rates include payment per box, per crate, per bushel, per row, per day, and per week.

TABLE 22.—*Rates received in Florida in preceding 12 months, migratory farmworkers, Belle Glade area, Fla., March 1953*

Wage rate	Cutting celery		Pulling corn		General farmwork		Nonfarmwork	
	Number	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*
All workers	184		182		39		[1] 184	
Rates per hour	103	100					117	100
Under $0.55 per hour	8	8			11	100	9	8
$0.55 to $0.59 per hour	12	12						
$0. 60 to $0.69 per hour	52	50			1	10	12	10
$0.70 to $0.79 per hour	27	26			10	90	40	34
$0.80 to $0.89 per hour	4	4					29	25
$0.90 to $0.99 per hour							1	1
$1 per hour and over							26	22
Rates per day	81	100	182	100	28	100	58	100
Under $5	4	5			5	18	13	22
$5 to $5.99	21	26	29	16	7	25	5	9
$6 to $6.99	31	38	64	35	7	25	11	19
$7 to $7.99	20	25	67	37	9	32	12	21
$8 and over	5	6	22	12			17	29

[1] Nonfarmworkers paid on a weekly basis were not included in this table.

common rate in all major States. Rates below this figure were reported most frequently in New York and North Carolina.

Methods of payment for picking tomatoes were even more variable, so only those on a ⅝-hamper basis are shown. Twenty-six percent of all reports were on this basis. In New York and New Jersey, most rates were reported on a ⅝-hamper basis; in Pennsylvania, on a per-basket basis. In Maryland, the basket was the unit most commonly reported, but bushels and ⅝ hampers were also common. In Virginia, the bushel was most commonly reported, but rates were also given in terms of baskets, boxes, buckets, and ⅝ hampers. In Florida, hourly and daily rates were reported in addition to per-box and per-bucket rates. Some of this variability probably was justified as part of the tomatoes were picked for the fresh market and part for canneries.

Payment on a time basis also permits comparisons, but most of these must be confined to Florida, the only State in which this type of payment was common. There it was reported in cutting celery, pulling corn, and in general farmwork. Workers who cut celery were paid on either an hourly or a daily basis. Common rates were 60 or 65 cents an hour, or $6 and $6.50 a day (table 22). The rate for pulling corn was slightly higher, $6 to $7.50 a day. The rate for general farmwork was in the same general range, although a somewhat larger proportion of the workers were paid at the high end of the range.

NONFARM EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS

Nonfarm jobs are greatly desired by some farmworkers as they commonly serve as steppingstones by which the workers can move permanently to other types of employment. Such jobs may constitute offseason employment when first entered into, but eventually they lead to opportunities for a complete change in occupation. Operation of this process can be seen in the reports given by migratory workers in the Belle Glade area. As indicated earlier, 25 percent of these workers had been employed in some type of nonfarmwork in the last 5 years. Fifteen percent had done some nonfarmwork in the last 12 months. Of the 1,285 workers in the survey, 194 said they had had a total of 233 nonfarm jobs in the preceding year. Sixty-five percent of these jobs were in Florida and the others were obtained while on the trip north. Employment in packinghouses in Maryland and Delaware was the most common type of nonfarm employment outside Florida.

A job in a packinghouse is a logical shift for an ambitious field worker. A fourth of all nonfarm jobs held in the preceding 12 months were of this type. Almost as many of the nonfarm jobs were designated as "construction work." Such jobs may be largely of the pick-and-shovel type, but they provide an approach to employment in more skilled lines of work. Construction jobs, together with those in factories and service work, were mainly in Florida.

Nonfarm jobs reported were seldom of the odd-job type. They were less temporary and provided an average of 75 days of employment. Packinghouse jobs provided an average of 81 days of work; factory jobs, 75 days; and construction jobs, 74 days (table 23). Casual jobs are not numerous in the Belle Glade area, but some underreporting of jobs of this type seems probable.

Nonfarm jobs in Florida provided fewer days of employment than those obtained on the trip north. They provided an average of 62

TABLE 23.—*Nonfarm employment and earnings in preceding 12 months, migratory farmworkers, by type of nonfarmwork done, Belle Glade area, Fla., March 1953*

Type of nonfarmwork	Total reports	Average days of work per worker	Average earnings per day per worker	Average nonfarm earnings per worker
	Number	*Number*	*Dollars*	*Dollars*
All workers	[1] 233	75	6. 93	520
Packing	55	81	7. 04	570
Truck driving	18	72	6. 96	501
Construction	46	74	8. 43	624
Factory work	47	75	7. 57	568
Service work	33	78	4. 24	331
Other nonfarmwork [2]	34	69	6. 12	422

[1] The figure 233 is a total of all reports of nonfarmwork. The same person sometimes reported 2 or more different types of nonfarmwork. Actually, 194 different workers reported doing nonfarmwork during the survey year.

[2] Includes work on railroads, as school-bus driver, in farmers' market, as camp manager, in public work, and at odd jobs.

days of work, while those in Delaware averaged 113 days, and those in Georgia (largely domestic service) averaged 144 days (table 24). Yet only 4 percent of the workers indicated that nonfarmwork had been their principal activity in the preceding 12 months.

Earnings at nonfarm jobs were significantly better than those at farmwork. They averaged $6.93 per day. This figure would be somewhat larger except for the inclusion of service workers who aver-

TABLE 24.—*Nonfarm employment and earnings in preceding 12 months, migratory farmworkers interviewed in Belle Glade area, Fla., March 1953, by State*

State	Total reports	Average days of work per worker	Average earnings per day per worker	Average nonfarm earnings per worker
	Number	*Number*	*Dollars*	*Dollars*
All workers	[1] 233	75	6. 93	520
Florida	152	62	6. 79	421
Georgia	11	144	3. 57	514
South Carolina	6	63	6. 38	402
Virginia	7	58	7. 57	439
Maryland	20	73	6. 90	504
Delaware	18	113	8. 13	919
New York	6	96	7. 12	684
Other States [2]	13	143	7. 69	1, 099

[1] This is a total of all reports of nonfarmwork. The same person sometimes reported nonfarmwork in 2 or more States. Actually, 194 different workers reported doing nonfarmwork during the survey year.

[2] Includes New Jersey, North Carolina, Alabama, Michigan, Arkansas, and Missouri.

aged only $4.24 a day. Truckdrivers had average daily earnings of $6.96 and factory workers $7.57. These compare with $5.40 earned per day by adult males at farmwork. Nonfarm earnings per day averaged highest in Delaware and lowest in Georgia, $8.13 and $3.57, respectively. These averages depend to a large extent on the type of work done. In Georgia, most of the workers were in service types of employment, while those in Delaware were largely employed in packinghouses.

Total earnings per worker for those who reported nonfarmwork during the year averaged $520. Truckdrivers averaged $501, and factory workers $568. Service workers averaged only $331. On a State basis, highest average earnings were in States in which relatively few workers were employed. Among listed States they were highest in Delaware, $919.

Workers who did nonfarmwork had both an employment and an income advantage over those who worked only at farm jobs. They worked an average of 214 days in the year and earned an average of $1,429, as compared with $908 for the sample group as a whole. Their nonfarm earnings ordinarily were higher than the amount they earned at farmwork. Sixty-one percent earned more than half of their total incomes in 1952 from nonfarmwork.

THE CREW SYSTEM IN THE ATLANTIC COAST MOVEMENT

The comparatively systematic movement of workers along the Atlantic coast can be explained partly in terms of geography and partly in terms of a concerted effort to get the available supply of labor to the right places at the right time. Most of the movement is in crews that are organized in Florida and either move step-by-step northward or to one other State and return. Two-thirds of the workers surveyed in the Belle Glade area were members of crews at the time they left Florida, and an additional number joined crews in the work areas. Whether this proportion is typical for all workers in the Atlantic coast area is not known. It is probable that the proportion of workers leaving in crews varies to some extent from one part of the home-base area to another.

Operation of the crew system on the Atlantic coast has been systematized by activities of State and Federal employment services. Each season employment service representatives go to Florida from the Atlantic Coast States and work out a system of preseason job commitments for crew leaders.[19] These arrangements are designed to provide continuity of employment for workers and a dependable source of labor for farmers. In addition, crew leaders and farmers are encouraged to make season-to-season arrangements. These agreements ordinarily are made at the close of the harvest, but often are supplemented by correspondence between the two parties.

During the period of movement, crew leaders are contacted at information stations or at other points along the route of travel. A count is made of the flow of workers to the various States and work areas. Some direction or redirection of movement is possible in case of crop failure, local labor shortages, or other changes in demand.

[19] For a more detailed description of the system of preseason commitments developed by State and Federal employment services see: C. B. Gilliam (*2*); C. W. E. Pittman (*7, 8*), and R. P. Umstead (*10*).

Between April and July 1952, crews moving out of Florida were contacted by Florida State Employment Service officials at truck stops along the Florida border. Of 20,092 workers in 896 crews, 6,618, or 33 percent, had no clearance from the employment service. These must not all be counted as freewheelers. Even though they had no 1952 clearance from the employment service, some or all may have been going to job commitments which had been arranged for in previous years, either with or without the help of the employment service. Local estimates were to the effect that 20 percent of the workers might be classified as freewheelers but this figure probably is an underestimate.[20]

During a period of years, individual crew leaders in the Atlantic coast movement have become pretty well known, both to farmers and to employment service officials. To quote T. N. Hurd, "virtually every crew in New York is known to the employment service and pertinent information concerning it is on file." [21] Those who are irresponsible or dishonest are also known, and they are not recommended for preseason commitments. Such people may continue to operate as freewheelers if they are able to find workers to go with them.

In connection with the present survey, 30 people who had led crews north in the preceding 12 months were interviewed in regard to their activities.[22] Only two of these leaders were white, but all had been in charge of Negro crews. Three of the thirty were women. The leaders had varying degrees of experience. Ten had become crew leaders within the last 3 years, 13 had been leading crews for from 4 to 9 years, 7 had been leading them for 10 years or more. More than half of the crew leaders had risen from the ranks of the migratory labor group, but five had been in some type of business for themselves before they started as crew leaders. These miscellaneous data provide a general idea of the type of people who are in the business of directing crews along the Atlantic coast.

The largest crew handled by the leaders interviewed numbered 185 workers, the smallest 13. The usual size was between 45 and 74. Two-thirds of the members of these crews were recruited in Florida, and the rest during the trip north. Crew leaders reported that many of the latter were workers who had "drifted" to them from other crews, probably from crews on farms where yields were low or other working conditions poor. Average crew size was a third greater at the point of greatest size than at the time the crew left Florida.

Crew leaders said that the stability of their crews varied according to crop and working conditions. On an average, two-thirds of the workers who started with them in Florida stayed with them throughout the season. Some of the 30 crew leaders lost no workers during

[20] Only 17 percent of the noncrew members in the survey said they had previous arrangements with employers, so even if all crew members had such arrangements the total proportion of all workers with season-to-season or preseason agreements would not be more than 72 percent.

[21] Hearings, President's Commission on Migratory Labor, 1950 (*14*).

[22] Crew leaders were interviewed by Eldon D. Smith of the former Bureau of Agricultural Economics staff. These materials in regard to the activities of crew leaders are drawn partly from the schedules and partly from Mr. Smith's notes. The sample of leaders to be interviewed was taken at random from a list of slightly less than 300, compiled by the Belle Glade Employment Service office.

the summer and others recruited more workers on the trip than had started with them in Florida. One crew leader who started out with a crew of 25 kept only 2 of them through the season. When asked how many workers he had recruited on the trip north he responded, "Hundreds of them." His jobs were on the basis of year-to-year arrangements and when they proved to be not very attractive his workers left him. Another crew leader explained that in a drought-stricken area in which he had taken a contract, practically his entire crew left him. As a result, he pirated labor from other crews and day-hauled labor from towns in order to complete the season's work itinerary.

Personal solicitation was the usual method of obtaining workers in Florida. Only one leader indicated use of the radio and of advertising cards for this purpose. On the trip north some crew leaders used personal solicitation and a few called on the employment service, but usually workers came to the leader and asked to join the crew.

The extent of specialization was similar to that reported by the workers. A few crew leaders had worked in beans or in potatoes alone, a fourth had worked in both beans and potatoes, and the rest had worked in various combinations of crops, which usually included beans and potatoes.

The average number of farmers worked for during the season was 6.5. Some crew leaders had worked for only 1 farmer on the trip north and 1 crew leader had worked for as many as 21 farmers. Crew leaders generally worked for only 1 or 2 farmers in New York and Maryland; and for 4 or 5 farmers in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Virginia. These figures include only farmers worked for during the trip up the coast.

The day-haul system in use in the Belle Glade area supplanted the crew system, and most crew leaders were out of business in winter. If they handled labor then it was as recruiting agent for a grower.

Most of the crew leaders transported their crews north in their own trucks; members of 1 crew made the trip in their own cars; and 1 crew used both these means of transportation. Transportation to the workers was free, except in 1 instance when the crew leader charged for a special trip which was taken for "pleasure."

Itineraries of crew leaders resemble those mentioned earlier by the workers. The majority had worked in 2 States outside Florida. States most frequently reported were New York, North Carolina, or Virginia. One had worked in 5 and another in 6 States outside Florida, but this type of heterogeneous movement was unusual.

Crew leaders tended to establish a pattern of movement which they followed year after year. Half of those who had been leading crews for 5 years or more had made no changes in the States they went to during a 5-year period. Crew leaders with less experience were inclined to change their pattern of movement more.

Most crew leaders were successful in getting some of the same workers to go with them year after year. Approximately half of the leaders who had been in the business for more than a year had up to 50 percent of the same workers they had the previous year; the rest had larger percentages, some running up to 75 and 100 percent. Reports for a 5-year period indicate that of the crew leaders who had operated during that period, a few had an entire change in crew membership, but some had up to 25 percent of the same workers, while others had more than 50 percent. Crew leaders who had any

success in holding their crews together felt that this was proof that they were able to get good contracts and that they treated their workers fairly and honestly.

Four-fifths of the 30 crew leaders had made arrangements at the end of the previous year to return to farm employers. Such arrangements were most common with farmers in New York, North Carolina, and Virginia. Some crew leaders had been in business for only a year and had had no opportunity to make such commitments.

Almost half of the crew leaders, including some that had made year-to-year arrangements, had made commitments for jobs in the spring before they left Florida. These commitments were most numerous with farmers in New York, but they were also common in North Carolina, Virginia, and Maryland.

Crew leaders who had entered into continuing arrangements ordinarily did not have them with all employers that they worked for during the season. The usual practice was to set up such arrangements with a major farm operator in an area and then work on other farms on a fill-in basis between major commitments.

Only a few of the crew leaders reported working for the identical farmers in the 1952 season that they had worked for in 1951. On an average, they worked for three farmers in the 1952 season that they had worked for the previous year. But employers of some crew leaders in 1952 were all new.

These situations indicate the significant role of season-to-season and preseason arrangements in the Atlantic coast migratory movement. No crew leader reported an absence of both types of arrangements. As such agreements ordinarily were made with major employers, while smaller employers were taken care of on a fill-in basis, a high proportion of the total season's work was actually arranged for in advance.

It is difficult to assess the role of the public employment office system in the Atlantic coast movement.[23] State and Federal employment offices have been active in helping crew leaders develop a system of satisfactory year-to-year arrangements. After satisfactory agreements have been developed, these agencies become less active and crew leaders go ahead with the established arrangements. But public agencies still have an active role with regard to new leaders and those whose activities have not been entirely taken care of by year-to-year agreements.

Coordinating and supplementing activities of crew leaders provide an economical use of public facilities in handling labor. To handle the entire job of preseason arrangements, orderly movement of workers, and placement in work areas on an individual worker basis would entail time and expense. Using the figure of 6.5 farmers worked for away from the home-base area, the estimated 50,000 workers in the Atlantic coast migratory stream would have had 325,000 job contacts on their trip north during the 1952 season.

Public agencies along the Atlantic coast have generally been active in helping to obtain better housing for migratory workers. These agencies include State employment services, as well as State departments of health. State employment services have done this on the principle that bad housing causes workers to be dissatisfied, to leave

[23] See Liss (*4, p. 995*), for an evaluation of various methods of recruiting migratory labor.

their jobs, and to mill around looking for more acceptable conditions. According to this principle, satisfactory housing is an essential requirement for the orderly movement of labor. Local employment services check housing facilities before they enter into preseason negotiations for any grower.

Crew leaders surveyed were questioned in regard to specific types of assistance they had received from State employment services. One in six had gone to these agencies to obtain workers for their crews, half of them had made contacts in regard to jobs, and a third had obtained information in regard to crop conditions. Contacts of these types were most frequently reported in New York, North Carolina, Maryland, Virginia, and Florida.

Functions of the Crew Leader

Functions performed by crew leaders varied greatly. Basic was recruitment of a group of workers, their transportation north and return, arrangement with growers for their employment, and supervision of their work. But these provided only the framework for many additional activities and responsibilities. One of a leader's first responsibilities was to decide which persons he would take and which he would leave behind. If he filled his truck with women and children, or people too old to do much work, his commissions would probably be low, while the problem of caring for the members during the trip would be multiplied; if he took any number of single men, problems of supervision might be greater.

In recruiting a crew there was always the problem of the drifters. A few crew leaders had a dependable core of workers on which they could rely each year. Some leaders do not know until the moment the trucks leave whether they will be full or nearly empty. According to one, "I never know who I have until we make the first rest stop, and even then some will be just going along for the ride and will jump off in Georgia or some other place!"

At the time of departure the leader is likely to find that some members of his crew are without funds to pay for groceries, medical care, or other expenses. Such needs become heavy when the harvest is delayed by bad weather or other causes. Crew leaders said they usually found it necessary to feed part of their crew up to the time of the first payday. Indebtedness is of some advantage to the leader, in that workers usually feel that they must stay with him until they have paid off their debts.

In each work area the crew leader made arrangements for housing his crew. If his employer had a labor camp, he was likely to be given the job of managing it. Labor camps were reported most frequently in New York, North Carolina, and Virginia. Managing the camp was difficult and problems were complex when the crew was large and composed of heterogeneous elements. If his crew was housed in a grower-association or community camp which had a hired manager, the responsibilities of the leader were greatly reduced.

Ordinarily it was part of the leader's job to transport his crew from camp to field each day. There he supervised the work done and kept a record of units harvested. Usually he paid the workers for work done, although on some jobs the farmer did the paying on the basis of records kept by the crew leader. The leader ordinarily had sole authority to discharge workers for unsatisfactory work or other

causes and to correct mistakes made by the workers. Ordinarily, if a farmer was not satisfied with the work of a crew member, he went to the crew leader rather than to the worker.

Crew leaders often found it desirable to maintain a commissary or other source of food or supplies for their workers. Most leaders interviewed sold some articles to their workers. The extent of these activities varied with the size of the crew and their needs in the localities where jobs were taken. Some crew leaders said they had a lunch wagon in the field from which they sold sandwiches, drinks, or light lunches; others maintained grocery stores or lunch counters. In addition, some crew leaders provided free transportation to the nearest village for shopping or recreational purposes.

Most crew leaders also had other tasks. Ordinarily they hauled produce picked by members of their crews from field to packing shed, cannery, or railroad platform. Loading and hauling usually called for an additional commission from the farmer. Some crew leaders took no jobs without this hauling agreement as they said they were unable to make any money by supplying labor alone. In the potato harvest the leader often became a "harvesting contractor." He performed all the harvest operations: Picking, hauling, grading, bagging, and loading into rail cars, at a specified rate per 100 pounds. He paid his pickers, loaders, haulers, and other workers at rates stipulated in agreements with them. In such instances he became an independent businessman and depended for his profits on striking a good bargain with the farmer on the one hand and with his workers on the other. Some of these contractors brought their own grading equipment; others obtained use of graders from their employers or from other sources. The same person might be a crew leader on one job and a harvesting contractor on another, depending on the type of agreement he was able to make with the farmer.

The system of preseason commitments greatly increased the responsibilities of crew leaders. If his crew finished in one area ahead of schedule and he had committed himself to have a crew of a specified size on another job at a later date, the leader might find it difficult to keep them from drifting away before the new work started. He was also confronted by the danger of losing his crew if, on arriving at a work location, the fields they were to pick had very light yields. Both continuing and preseason agreements were something of a gamble in that neither worker nor crew leader could be sure ahead of the season as to yields and crop condition in the fields where they were to work. If a leader took his crew into a work area too soon, his workers might drift over to other farms where work was already in progress. The system of job commitments makes it important that the crew leader have as stable a group of workers as possible.

Rates of Pay

Crew leaders ordinarily were paid on a commission basis. Commissions in the bean harvest varied considerably from job to job. The most frequently reported agreements were as follows:

Beans, per hamper:

50 cents to worker; 10 cents to crew leader for supplying workers; 10 cents for hauling.

50 cents to worker; 15 cents to crew leader for supplying workers; no hauling.

75 cents to crew leader; he hauls produce and pays workers.

Rates for supplying workers sometimes ran as high as 20 cents a hamper without hauling. Ordinarily, in these cases, no housing was provided and either the crew leader or the worker might have to pay for it. Only one crew leader in bean operations said he was paid on a time basis, $10 a day for supplying a small crew.

In a few cases crew leaders were paid a flat rate for the job. They obtained pickers at their own price and made their profits by keeping costs as low as possible. Essentially these people had become labor contractors.[24] Only a few contracts of this type were reported in picking beans, but they were more common in the potato harvest.

Contracts in the potato harvest varied so greatly that no two of those reported were exactly alike. Several types of agreements are indicated here:

Potatoes

10 cents per cwt. to picker; 10 cents per cwt. to crew leader; crew leader supervises, checks, loads, hauls, and unloads.

10 cents per cwt. to picker; 32 cents per cwt. to crew leader; crew leader supervises, checks, loads, hauls to grader, grades, and hauls to car.

8 cents per bushel to picker; 5 cents per bushel to crew leader; crew leader supervises, checks, and hauls.

35 cents per cwt. graded to crew leader; of this the crew leader pays 4 cents per ⅔ basket to pickers and pays his day workers for loading, hauling, grading, and other harvest operations.

Day rates to crew leaders were somewhat more common in the minor crops. A rate of $10 per day was usual, but 1 crew leader received as high as $20. A typical situation: 35 cents per 8-quart pail of cherries to worker; $10 a day to crew leader who supervises and checks the workers.

Problems of the Crew System

The coordinated crew arrangement along the Atlantic coast has become a highly efficient method of handling migratory labor, as compared with the methods in vogue when employers and their agents from labor-competitive States pirated labor from each other. Yet considerable uncertainty is still connected with it. Much of this uncertainty is due to the unpredictability of the demand for labor. Neither farmers nor crew leaders can predict yields, weather, and similar factors at the time labor contracts are made. Such conditions call for a highly flexible system of job arrangements. The system of preseason commitments places on the crew leader the heavy responsibility of building up, financing, and holding his crew together at a time when he is unable to foresee crop conditions. This responsibility may sometimes be lessened when growers and crew leaders keep in close touch with each other before the season opens.

Giving crew leaders greater responsibility reduces to some extent the risk of unemployment and intermittent employment faced by workers. Leaders become active in obtaining fill-in jobs between their contracts in efforts to hold their crews together.

An additional problem in the system of preseason commitments arises when demand for labor is intermittent; for example, between the various pickings of tomatoes on a farm, or between the harvests of several crops. Periods of idleness between pickings or crops make it difficult for a crew leader to hold his workers together. Although preseason commitments do not meet this problem, some crew leaders

[24] For a discussion of crew leaders and labor contractors, see Ross and Liss (*9*).

indicated that grower-association arrangements were often effective in providing fill-in employment. Possibly the two methods may serve to supplement each other. The other alternative is close cooperation of growers and crew leaders with local employment offices.

As some flexibility is needed, fluidity in crew size and membership may be desirable. Workers move to the acreages on which they can make the most money. The poorer fields are handled later. The disadvantage in this case is to the farmer who has less to offer, but it accrues also to workers who remain loyal to their crew leaders. Yet labor is utilized to better advantage than if less productive fields were picked ahead of the good ones.

Uncertainty in regard to adequacy of the labor supply causes some farm operators to ask for more labor than they need. This means underutilization of labor and increased instability of crews. A dependable system of preseason commitments by responsible crew leaders should eventually make overordering unnecessary.

Under a system of preseason arrangements, there is the problem of matching size of the crew and size of the job. For example, leaders who needed large crews for a commitment in New York, sometimes found that growers in North Carolina or other intermediate States were unable to house the entire crew. They disliked to break up their crews as this is an easy way to lose workers. A small crew may also have disadvantages. Leaders of small crews sometimes complained that they were unable to obtain the larger and better contracts.

The market for migratory labor on the Atlantic coast has been organized to a greater extent than that of any other large area in the country. The chance of failure to have an adequate supply of labor has been greatly diminished. Farmers can plan their operations with a reasonable assurance that they will have the labor to take care of the harvest. The chance of an oversupply of workers, with accompanying unemployment and stranding of workers, has also been diminished. Duplication of recruiting and haphazard seeking for work have been reduced and large numbers of workers are moved with a minimum of effort.

Organization of grower associations has also helped to bring about better utilization of labor. These organizations centralize the demand for seasonal labor, thus preventing the bringing in of competing crews. They provide placement facilities that give more continuous employment for the crews brought in. Crew leaders who had worked in such areas preferred to return to them.

The heavy responsibilities placed on crew leaders by the system of preseason arrangements did not appear to discourage them. Half of those interviewed said they hoped to take a larger crew north next year. But a few planned to reduce their operations until they moved only the members of their families. They claimed that workers were irresponsible and had left their crews while they were still deeply in debt.

CREW AND NONCREW WORKERS

Employment and earnings records of crew and noncrew workers in the survey group are not directly comparable. In the first place, the noncrew group includes most of those migrants who moved only to Florida, as well as those who moved up the coast as individuals or in family groups. Migrants to Florida had significantly less employment and smaller earnings than the east coast migrants. Hence, this

group is excluded from all comparisons. Yet strict comparability is still lacking, because of the differing composition of the 2 groups. Among crew workers, 11 percent were children under 16; among noncrew workers, 6 percent were in this category. In table 7 it was observed that 65 percent of male heads of households were crew members, but that 86 percent of schoolgirls under 16 were members of crews.

Comparison of employment and earnings of crew and noncrew workers is also affected by the fact that crew workers returned to Florida somewhat earlier than noncrew workers. This again is probably connected with the fact that crews contained a greater number of schoolchildren. On an average, 33 percent of the crew workers were out of the State for more than 150 days, as compared with 46 percent of the noncrew workers. (See table 13.)

Noncrew workers were less mobile than those who traveled in crews. Ordinarily they went to 1 location outside Florida and remained there until the end of the season. Only a fourth went to more than 1 State (table 25). Hence, on a State basis, they averaged higher total earnings than workers who were members of crews. The difference in earnings was especially great in such States as North Carolina, South Carolina, Delaware, and New Jersey.

TABLE 25.—*Number of States worked in by migratory workers in preceding 12 months, by crew status, Belle Glade area, Fla., March 1953*

Number of States worked in outside Florida	All workers		Crew status			
			Crew		Noncrew	
	Number	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*
All workers	[1] 1, 151	100	770	100	381	100
1	517	45	229	30	288	76
2	382	33	332	43	50	13
3	198	17	163	21	35	9
4	47	4	43	6	4	1
5 or more	7	1	3	[2]	4	1

[1] Does not include migrants to Florida.
[2] Less than 0.5 percent.

The data indicate that individual workers have the ability to stay in one spot and shift from crop to crop during a season. Large groups require operations of considerable size in order to keep all members employed. Hence they may need to change location more frequently than individuals or small groups.

An additional circumstance affecting comparative wages and earnings was the fact that workers who took nonfarm jobs ordinarily were not members of crews. The influence of higher earnings at such jobs was particularly great in Florida, New Jersey, Maryland, and Delaware, where packinghouse or other nonfarmwork was relatively common.

Methods used by noncrew workers to get jobs are indicated in table 26. A total of 17 percent had some type of preseason understanding

TABLE 26.—*Method of finding jobs used by noncrew migratory workers in preceding 12 months, Belle Glade area, Fla., March 1953*

Method of finding jobs	All reports in regard to methods		Atlantic coast migrants				Migrants to Florida	
			Town residents		Camp residents			
	Number	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*
All methods	858	100	498	100	218	100	142	100
Employment service	16	2	10	2	6	3	----------	----------
Crew leaders	124	14	106	21	16	7	2	1
Farmers or their agents	135	16	66	13	50	23	19	13
Friends and relatives	262	30	118	24	62	29	82	58
Personal search	173	20	126	25	16	7	31	22
Previous contacts with employers	143	17	72	15	63	29	8	6
Others	5	1	----------	----------	5	2	----------	----------

with farmers. The proportion in the camps was 29 percent. But the most common method used was to obtain jobs through friends and relatives. Many seasonal workers have settled in the work areas along the Atlantic coast and apparently they invite their friends and relatives in the South to move in with them during the harvest season and share in their employment. Other noncrew members obtained their jobs through personal search in the work areas or by contacting farmers there. Workers in these latter categories might appropriately be labeled as freewheelers. This label might also apply to an additional 14 percent who joined crews in work areas in order to obtain employment.

Migrants to Florida were even more dependent on friends and relatives for their employment contacts. More than half used this method, while others relied on direct contact with employers. Job contacts for harvest work in the Belle Glade area should not be difficult as they are made largely at the day-haul loading platform.

FACTORS RELATED TO EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS

The heterogeneous character of the migratory workers in the sample makes detailed examination of the figures in regard to employment and earnings desirable. Chief differences are those of age, sex, family status, and school attendance, which were incorporated in earlier tables. Distribution of workers according to amount of employment and earnings obtained indicates that a considerable number were fully employed and had rather creditable earnings.

Distribution of workers according to number of days worked indicates that 4 percent worked less than 50 days, or a total of approximately 9 weeks (table 27). Major group in this employment bracket was the school youth, which included 18 percent of the boys and 29 percent of the girls, but a few adults were also included. Only a few of the school youth worked more than 149 days. All but 12 percent of the male heads of households worked more than this amount, as did all but 34 percent of the other males over 16.

The highest proportion of male heads of households, 43 percent, worked between 200 and 249 days. A small proportion of the workers, 4 percent, had employment for 300 days or more during the year. To obtain that much employment, they had to work more than 5¼ days a week. This group was made up largely of adult males.

On an earnings basis, these differences are accentuated. While 13 percent of the entire group made less than $300, more than two-thirds of the school youth made less than this amount (table 28). Adult workers generally were most numerous in the $900 to $1,200 bracket. An exception was the group of female workers over 16 who were not heads of households. Their earnings generally fell in the $600 to $900 bracket. Six percent of the workers had earnings of more than $1,800. All but a few of these were male heads of households.

Years of migratory work

Migratory workers increase their earnings as they acquire experience (table 29). The gain may be due to greater skill in selecting work areas and employers than in rate of performing a particular task. The comparison in table 29 is not as precise as it might be as it includes a certain number of schoolchildren among the more recent entrants to

TABLE 27.—*Percentage of migratory farm workers who worked stated number of days in the last 12 months, by type of worker, Belle Glade area, Fla., March 1953*

Type of worker	All workers		Days worked in last 12 months						
			Under 50	50–99	100–149	150–199	200–249	250–299	300 and over
	Number	*Percent*	*Percent*	*Percent*	*Percent*	*Percent*	*Percent*	*Percent*	*Percent*
All workers	1, 285	100	4	9	16	27	29	11	4
Male heads of households	502	100	(1)	2	10	24	43	15	6
Other males, 16 and over	120	100	3	8	23	32	23	4	7
School males under 16	44	100	18	50	27	5			
Nonschool males under 16	13	100			23	77			
Female heads of households	153	100	5	6	14	29	30	14	2
Other females, 16 and over	387	100	3	12	20	32	23	9	1
School females under 16	45	100	29	24	45	2			
Nonschool females under 16	21	100		29	14	57			

[1] Less than 0.5 percent.

TABLE 28.—*Percentage of migratory workers who had earnings of stated amounts in the preceding 12 months, by type of worker, Belle Glade area, Fla., March 1953*

Type of worker	All workers		Earnings per worker							
			Under $300	$300 to $599	$600 to $899	$900 to $1,199	$1,200 to $1,499	$1,500 to $1,799	$1,800 to $2,099	$2,100 and over
	Number	*Percent*	*Percent*	*Percent*	*Percent*	*Percent*	*Percent*	*Percent*	*Percent*	*Percent*
All workers	1,285	100	13	17	23	22	13	6	3	3
Male heads of households	502	100	3	10	20	26	17	11	7	6
Other males, 16 and over	120	100	9	18	23	28	17	1	2	2
School males under 16	44	100	68	16	14	-------	2	-------	-------	-------
Nonschool males under 16	13	100	23	38	8	23	8	-------	-------	-------
Female heads of households	153	100	9	17	26	31	10	4	1	2
Other females, 16 and over	387	100	13	22	31	19	10	3	1	1
School females under 16	45	100	69	18	13	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------
Nonschool females under 16	21	100	43	48	9	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------

TABLE 29.—*Earnings of migratory farmworkers in the preceding 12 months, by length of time engaged in migratory farmwork, Belle Glade area, Fla., March 1953*

Year started doing migratory farmwork	All workers		Workers with earnings in last 12 months of—					
			Less than $300	$300 to $599	$600 to $899	$900 to $1,199	$1,200 to $1,499	$1,500 and over
	Number	*Percent*	*Number*	*Number*	*Number*	*Number*	*Number*	*Number*
All workers	1,285		163	214	300	284	164	160
Nonreporting workers	47		13	10	6	10	2	6
All reporting workers	1,238		150	204	294	274	162	154
			Percent	*Percent*	*Percent*	*Percent*	*Percent*	*Percent*
All reporting workers	1,238	100	12	17	24	22	13	12
Prior to 1935	36	100		19	25	31		25
1935–39	129	100	4	11	28	22	18	17
1940–44	311	100	9	23	21	22	15	10
1945–49	415	100	12	16	26	21	13	12
Since 1949	347	100	19	14	22	23	11	11

the migratory labor force. But they constitute less than 7 percent of the total number of workers and appear largely in the under $300 column, so their influence can be separated from the rest of the table. Net results still indicate a significant gain in earning power with years of experience. Even when migrants to Florida are excluded from the comparison, Atlantic coast migrants show some gain in earnings with years of experience. The more proficient migrants might be expected to advance into regular farm or nonfarm employment, leaving the less capable in the migratory labor force. Output and earnings might be expected to decrease with years in this line of work. But this is not the case. Even though the more proficient may leave, those who remain also increase their earnings.

Mobility

As previously indicated, occupational mobility resulted in greater employment and earnings. This was true also of geographic mobility. Of workers who went to either 1 or 2 States, only 25 percent had more than 199 days of employment; of those who went to 3 or 4 States, 44 percent had more than 199 days; 5 States, 58 percent; and 6 States, 71 percent. This is partly due to the fact that families with school-children were less mobile than the others (table 30). Workers who were employed less than 50 days were most numerous in the group that went to only 1 State. There were none of these among the workers who went to 5 or 6 States.

TABLE 30.—*Percentage of migratory farmworkers with a stated number of days of farm employment in the preceding 12 months, by number of States worked in, Belle Glade area, Fla., March 1953*

Number of States worked in outside Florida	All workers		Number of days of farmwork					
			Under 50	50–99	100–149	150–199	200–249	250 and over
	Number	*Percent*	*Percent*	*Percent*	*Percent*	*Percent*	*Percent*	*Percent*
All workers	[1] 1, 280	100	6	12	20	27	25	10
1	105	100	19	10	23	22	16	10
2	534	100	8	14	25	28	17	8
3	384	100	2	10	16	28	38	6
4	203	100	1	8	18	29	27	17
5	47	100	------	19	8	15	32	26
6	7	100	------	29	------	------	29	42

[1] 5 workers not included in this tabulation.

OTHER USES OF WORKERS' TIME

Days on the Road

The popular conception in regard to migratory farmworkers is that they spend a good deal of time wandering from place to place in search of employment. This was not true of the migrants in the sample.

Most frequently reported was either 6 or 8 days spent in travel. The number of days reported may be listed as follows:

Days on road:	Workers reporting	
	Number	*Percent*
1–4	281	22
5–8	628	49
9–12	255	20
More than 12	67	5
No report	54	4

Only 2 workers, a young man and his wife, said they spent more than 16 days on the road. They had taken 140 days for the trip north, going first to South Carolina, then to 2 different places in Maryland, then back to South Carolina before returning to Florida. The man worked 90 days and earned $430. His wife worked 81 days and earned $268. Yet they indicated that they had not been available for more employment.

Those workers who had spent only 1 or 2 days in travel were largely one-way migrants from Georgia, Alabama, or other Southeastern States to Florida. Members of crews averaged almost 8 days in travel, as compared with less than 6 days for noncrew workers. This is in keeping with the fact that crew workers averaged a greater number of moves than noncrew workers.

Considering the fact that the average length of travel of the migrants surveyed was around 2,000 miles, the amount of travel time reported is remarkably low. Even though the workers may have been conservative in estimating their travel time, they must still have been very systematic in their movements.

Migrants frequently said they had done their traveling on Saturdays and Sundays and thus had actually lost no working time because of movement from place to place.

Time Spent on Vacation

The term "vacation" had an unfamiliar ring to many migratory workers. Less than 1 in 6 reported taking any time out which they could refer to as a vacation. Sometimes this was a trip to visit relatives in Florida, Georgia, or another State, or a stopoff with them during the trip north. Periods of unemployment between seasons ordinarily were not regarded as a vacation, although a number of workers indicated that they took their vacations during that time.

Usually only from 5 to 10 days were spent on such vacations. Length of vacations can be listed as follows:

Days on vacation:	Workers reporting	
	Number	*Percent*
None	1,071	83
1–5	83	7
6–10	82	6
11–20	36	3
More than 20	13	1

Total number of days spent on vacations was 2,008, an average of 1.6 days per worker in the survey. It seems probable that only those workers in the survey who had had some contact with nonfarm employment or other urban ways of life could evaluate their time away from work in terms of vacation time.

These workers may not regard fishing trips or visits to nearby friends as vacations. In general, their lives are less governed by the

time clock than those of industrial and commercial workers, and they do not discriminate much between days of different types.

Dry Runs

Either the workers surveyed made few bad moves or they had forgotten about them. Only 17 of the 1,285 workers in the survey, or 1.3 percent, said they had gone to a location where they had found little or no work. These workers indicated that they had gone to 1 such location each. In these moves, they had obtained a total of 40 days of work but had lost 128 days. Such moves, then, had netted an average of 2.4 days of employment and a loss of 7.5 days of worktime.

Fifteen of the workers said they had made the bad move without advice from anyone; 2 went on the advice of friends. In 10 cases the move was ill-timed; 7 went to an area before the crop was ready to harvest, 3 to an area after the harvest was over. In 6 cases the workers were unable to do very much because of unfavorable weather.

PROBLEMS OF GREATER UTILIZATION OF ATLANTIC COAST WORKERS

The amount of employment these people obtained during the survey year greatly exceeds popular expectations concerning employment of migratory farmworkers. Apparently the scheduling program has been effective in obtaining more complete utilization of the time of these people. Yet the period of no employment, approximately 3.5 months for nonschool workers, is so highly concentrated at one period of the year as still to constitute a problem. It is during the unscheduled part of the year that utilization can be further improved.

Analysis of the employment records of these workers indicates that unemployment from March 1952 to March 1953 was most frequent under these conditions:

1. In fall after the workers had returned from their migration up the coast.
2. During periods of crop loss in Florida in winter when there was little alternative employment elsewhere.
3. Among workers migrating to Florida from Georgia and other States.
4. Among workers who were too highly specialized.
5. Among nonheads of families and particularly women.

Most of these conditions are subject to improvement. Action toward improvement should be practical in this area as progress already made provides a foundation for an even more complete organization of the labor market.

The most significant condition revolves around loss of time in late fall and winter. This loss was due partly to destruction of Florida crops by bad weather—a circumstance not peculiar to the 1952 season—and partly to an annual slack period in which unemployment is common. Labor demands in the coastal area are unbalanced in that they tend to overlap in spring, and farmers north of Florida are concerned as to whether they will have labor soon enough to handle their crops. In late fall, labor needs are not adequate to keep the workers employed. This is not so much a Florida problem as it is one of the entire Atlantic coast work area.

Farmers on the Atlantic coast who are concerned about labor supplies might experiment with the possibility of shifting from crops that mature in spring to those for which labor is required in October, November, or December. At present, workers are inclined to leave for Florida too soon in the fall. How much longer they might be induced to remain out of the State is a question. It is possible that changes to plantings that mature in the fall might be advantageous, either in Florida or in other Southern States. At present, plantings of this type are encouraged in Virginia, and results of the program will be significant for other States in the area.

The idea that farmers can shift their crops or planting dates runs into the hard economic fact of the comparative profit that producers might gain from alternative planting programs. Experimentation along these lines may be more expensive than individual farmers should bear. Public agencies might properly bear the expense of such experiments in the interest of maintaining an adequate labor supply in the area.

An equally hard economic fact is that workers are not likely to stay in the Atlantic coast movement if they have a 6-week seasonal loss of time, as did the workers surveyed. Insofar as such losses are common, some adjustment in the labor market is called for if existing labor supplies are to be retained in agriculture. Public agencies can be helpful in bringing about this readjustment.

Uncertain employment conditions for seasonal farmworkers in Florida from November to March constitute an important aspect of this problem. Rain, frost, and other adverse weather result in crop failures in all but the most protected areas at some time in most winters.[25] There are few alternative opportunities for employment. Those that do exist appear to be unattractive to seasonal workers. If these workers were sent to other winter-harvest areas, they might be lost for use on the Atlantic coast.

Measures are needed to tighten up these gaps in employment. Workers become dissatisfied in such periods and often leave seasonal farm employment to go into urban industries. So far the exodus from farm employment has been matched by an influx of potential workers from Georgia, South Carolina, and other States. Pressure of population on farm resources in the Southeast has been relieved and at the same time the supply of workers in the Atlantic coast migratory stream has been replenished. Presumably this process will be of limited duration. At some time the sources of additional domestic manpower may partly or completely dry up. This situation would lead to two alternatives: (1) Dependence of farm people on supplies of imported labor; and (2) provision of wages, hours, and working conditions that can compete with those of nonfarm employment.

Emigrant agent laws and similar legislation evidence some concern in regard to conservation of manpower resources. Importation of labor from the British West Indies and Puerto Rico indicates the beginning of dependence on outside labor. Atlantic coast farm employers might well get together and shape up constructive long-range manpower policies. The cooperation and mutual understanding al-

[25] Most workers in the survey group remained at their homes in Belle Glade in winter despite the crop losses. They might have obtained somewhat more employment if they had migrated to other parts of Florida where damage from weather was not so great.

ready established should provide a foundation for future constructive action.

Movement of migrants into Florida represents unregulated voluntary response to economic pressures. Whether this movement is as subject to prearrangement as movement of migrants up the Atlantic coast is doubtful, but a significantly greater loss of time is found among migrants to Florida than among coast migrants.

Much of the unemployment of workers migrating to Florida occurred before they came to the State; it indicates underutilization of manpower in other areas of the Southeast. Movement of these people to Florida evidently is an effort to overcome this lack of employment and income; it is a natural corrective of the situation. The question arises as to whether this process of adjustment should be speeded up, reduced, or left to work itself out according to economic conditions. The rate of this movement is part of the total coastal manpower situation. The time when this source of labor will be used up is of even greater importance.

Unemployment of migrants to Florida in the winter of 1952 appears to be a matter of lack of employment opportunities in that State, rather than of inability to make employment contacts. Under the day-haul system in use at Belle Glade, a new worker from outside the State has as much opportunity to climb aboard a farmer's truck at the loading platform as do workers who have been in the area for a long time. Furthermore, much of the movement to Florida was with the help of friends and relatives, so unfamiliarity with local crops and employment facilities was less important than might be expected. Their movement to Florida in 1952 was not properly timed, but there is some question as to whether these workers could have done any better in their home States.

Too much specialization by workers also was a significant cause of unemployment. This type of specialization is common among migratory workers in other parts of the country; it has generally been ascribed to lack of familiarity with the skills needed to do other jobs rapidly enough to make wages. During World War II, seasonal farmworkers were given special training courses in methods of performing various harvest operations. A limited training program of this kind at Belle Glade, Elizabeth City, Exmore, and other main stops along the migratory routes might help to get workers away from too much specialization. Many helpful pamphlets on methods of performing various harvest operations have been published; they could be made available to farm workers at community camps and other worker concentrations.

The problem of underutilization of the time of workers other than heads of households would require much more analysis than can be made from the data in this survey. Probably many of the women were engaged in housework or child care and the question arises as to the extent to which women should give up these duties. Youth without family responsibilities may also need some free time in which to make vocational and other decisions.

Although the greatest loss of time came in the slack season of the year, some loss during the busy season was reported by a high proportion of the workers. Much of this was due to unfavorable weather, but evidently there was delay between jobs or on particular jobs. Reports by workers generally indicate availability for work during those periods of idleness. Some tightening up of utilization would

appear to be possible in such periods. Evidence was not obtained as to whether this should be done on individual farms or whether directional and placement procedures were at fault.

Under present employment conditions, full utilization of his time during the busy season is of prime importance to any migratory worker. His working season is relatively short, and he must earn enough to carry him through the slack period in late fall. Continuity of employment has some bearing on maintenance of the labor supply in the Atlantic coast migratory stream. The commitment program could be supplemented in each work area by a program to keep workers employed as continuously as possible.

Data indicate that closer examination for causes of loss of time is needed along four different lines: (1) Practices at the farm level; (2) activities of crew leaders and other labor middlemen; (3) facilitating operations of public agencies; and (4) work habits of the migrants. Farmers need to know whether such practices exist as: Overordering of workers; ordering them in advance of the time they are needed; disregard of the need to keep workers employed; loss of time because of market situations and market contracts; failure to use the facilities of public agencies designated to promote better labor utilization. If such practices are common, they hamper smooth operation of the Atlantic coast labor market.

Activities of crew leaders that might result in unnecessary loss of time also need examination. Some leaders may spend so much time in hauling, supervision, and other routine duties that they cannot look after job contacts carefully enough. Attention might be given to optimum crew size. Apparently some crews are too large to fit into any but the largest jobs and leaders dislike to break them up. Too many workers on smaller jobs are likely to result in irregular employment for all the migrants. Methods of payment to crew leaders might be studied with a view to redesigning them to promote better labor utilization.

Relative efficiency of different labor-marketing systems could be analyzed; for example, the day-haul system, the labor-association method,[26] and the grower-crewleader method. The first two of these are relatively new and their advantages and disadvantages have not been carefully analyzed.

State farm placement services along the Atlantic seaboard have given much time to methods of improving their services. Their informational and directional activities are increasingly effective. But many farmers still rely mainly on their own efforts to recruit seasonal workers and they still regard the employment service as supplementary. A better articulation of these public services with activities of farmers and crew leaders could be achieved.

Evidence in the study reported here indicates that the farmworkers themselves were partly responsible for lack of employment. Those who worked in 5 different crops average 70 more days of employment than those who worked only in beans. Workers who were less mobile also obtained less work than those who moved about more. Some workers may not be sufficiently interested in obtaining more employment to be willing to learn new operations or to work in new areas. But workers who are anxious to increase their incomes would be good material for training courses in developing new skills or in improving

[26] Associations with labor camps which keep workers continuously employed by referring them from farm to farm within the local area.

old ones. They constitute the valuable type of worker who is likely to leave the farm labor supply for nonfarm employment, but who might be induced to stay if employment and income advantages were sufficiently attractive. How much training to give such workers is something of a gamble. It might pay off if their new skills can be used to obtain more continuous farm employment.

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APPENDIX

Terminology Used in This Report

Crew.—An organized group of workers headed by a crew leader who recruits the members of the crew and negotiates with employers concerning housing, transportation, wages, and other conditions of employment.

Crew leader and *labor contractor.*—The former is the organizer and spokesman for a crew; the second contracts with a farmer to handle a particular farm job for a stipulated amount, then uses his crew to get the job done. The first is merely an agent, the second is an independent businessman and employer of the members of his crew.

Day haul.—The daily transportation of recruited workers from designated assembly points to agricultural employment and return.

Days available when not at work.—Workdays on which no work was done, but on which worker was ready, willing, and able to work.

Days lost, external causes.—Workdays lost because of bad weather, loss of crops, or period of slack employment.

Days lost, personal reasons.—Workdays lost because of illness, disability, resting, taking vacation, or keeping house.

Employment.—Work for wages during all or any part of a day. Days as sharecropper not included.

Farmworker.—A person who did farmwork at any time during the survey year.

Freewheelers.—Individuals, families, or crews who migrated without having definite job commitments. They took jobs wherever they could find them.

Location.—An area in which a migratory worker did some work, farm or nonfarm, during the preceding 12 months. Only one was counted per State, hence number of locations and number of States worked in are the same.

Migrant to Florida.—A person who migrated into Florida during the last 12 months, but who did not join the northward migration along the Atlantic coast.

Migratory farmworker.—A person who did farmwork outside Palm Beach County at any time during the survey year.

Migratory household.—A household in which 1 or more members worked outside Palm Beach County in the preceding 12 months. Although all members of a household ordinarily migrated as a unit, individual members sometimes remained at home, for example, women with small children, workers with permanent employment.

Preseason arrangement.—An agreement made through the State and Federal employment services, that a crew leader will bring a crew of a stipulated size to harvest a given farmer's crops.

Season-to-season arrangement.—An agreement between a farmer and the crew leader who has supplied him with a crew, to the effect that the crew leader will supply the farmer with a crew again the next season.

Survey year.—The 12-month period, March 1952 to March 1953, preceding the date of the interview.

Workdays not worked.—Workdays on which no work was done.

Work year.—267 workdays; that is, total days in year after Sundays, holidays, travel days, and three-fourths of Saturdays are excluded. Based on a workweek of 5¼ days.

Sampling

Sampling procedures were adapted to the two different types of housing situations that exist for farmworkers in the Belle Glade area. Local opinion was to the effect that three-fourths of the migratory workers lived in the towns of Belle Glade, Pahokee, and South Bay, and that another fourth lived in the large housing authority camps originally constructed by the Federal Government but now operated by local housing authority units. These are Camp Okeechobee at Belle Glade, Everlades at Pahokee, and Canal Point at Canal Point.

Sampling in the Camps

The administrative offices of the housing authority camps maintained a card register of all households in the camps. These registration cards were divided into 2 groups on the basis of high- or low-rental rates. Every third household was drawn from each of these 2 sets of cards. All workers in the selected households who had worked outside Palm Beach County in the preceding 12 months were interviewed. It developed that a smaller proportion of the farmworkers in the camps had done migratory farmwork than had been anticipated. The size of the sample was then increased in order to obtain the desired number of interviews. The final sampling rate was 0.619, or 1 in 1.61 households.

A total of 451 households was contacted in the camps, of which 158, or 35 percent, contained 1 or more persons who had done migratory farmwork in the preceding 12 months. The 158 households contained 635 persons, of whom 397 qualified as migratory farmworkers.

Sampling in the Towns

Belle Glade, Pahokee, and South Bay each have areas with high concentrations of Negroes. Residential portions of these areas are made up of apartment houses of varying sizes, together with a few duplexes and single family dwellings. Sketches were drawn of each block in the sample area which showed the location of all buildings and the estimated number of households in each. Each building was classified into 1 of 3 strata:

Stratum I—buildings containing 1 to 5 households.
Stratum II—buildings containing 6 to 15 households.
Stratum III—buildings containing more than 15 households.

Three-eighths of the buildings in strata I and II were selected systematically in serpentine fashion and interviewers were instructed to contact all households in these designated buildings. All buildings in stratum III were included in the sample, but only three-eighths of the households in them were to be contacted. Each apartment in these buildings ordinarily bore a number and interviewers were given a list of apartment numbers that were to be included in the sample.

As in the case of the camp sample, there were fewer migratory workers in the area than had been anticipated, and the sampling rate was increased. The final sampling rate in the town areas was 0.1875, or 1 in 5.32 households.

In the towns, a total of 463 households was contacted, of which 156, or 34 percent, contained 1 or more persons who had done migratory farmwork in the preceding 12 months. The 156 households contained 373 persons, of whom 269 qualified as migratory farmworkers.

Weighting of the Data

Because of the differential in sampling rates between camps and towns, each town schedule was given a weight of 3.3. Totals reported in the various tables were arrived at by adding totals for towns, multiplied by 3.3, to totals for camps. The 156 households in the towns, therefore, were treated as 515 households to give town households an equal weight in the sample with camp households. Households of migrants to Florida were separated and treated independently from those of migrants in the Atlantic coast migratory stream. The same system of weights was applied to these households. The rate of nonresponse for all groups was extremely low.

Relationship of Timing to the Sample

The actual sample obtained was affected to some extent by the time the survey was made. When the interviews were made, the peak period of local labor use was still several weeks away. Workers were moving in daily from Homestead, Fort Lauderdale, and other points in Florida, but many more would be coming in soon. The sample group consisted largely of workers whose winter residence was in the Belle Glade area. Fewer migrants into Belle Glade were included than would have been if the survey had been made several weeks later. This may have resulted in a comparatively high proportion of workers who specialized in picking beans. It reduced the proportion of migrants within Florida.

Special Types of Movement

Between Holdings of One Employer

The sample group in Belle Glade included 25 migrants who worked for only 1 employer during the 12 months. Employers of these workers were vegetable producers with operations both in Florida and in Ohio. By having farms in both States, they were able to provide a continuous flow of vegetables to their market outlets. This type of operation also made it possible for them to move their harvest workers between Florida and Ohio and thus provide them with fairly continuous employment.[1]

Employees of these companies said they usually left Florida early in May and returned late in October. All but a few traveled in family groups rather than in crews. A majority specialized in one crop, radishes, but others worked in several crops, depending on the production program of the company for which they worked.

Despite adverse weather in Florida in the fall and winter of 1952, adult workers in this group obtained approximately 176 days of employment during the season; 96 days in Florida, and 80 in Ohio. Average time spent in Florida was reported as 201 days, and in Ohio as 153. This would mean 12 days spent in travel, or considerably more than that of the workers in the Atlantic coast migratory stream. Excluding Sundays, holidays, and three-fourths of Saturdays, they were in Florida on 148 workdays and in Ohio on 115. They lost 52 days in Florida, and 35 during the summer in Ohio. This was a loss of 30 percent of their working time in Ohio and 35 percent in Florida.

[1] The activities of these companies are written up in the Tampa Tribune for March 1, 1953 (*3*).

Workers who had no major losses of time because of personal reasons, such as illness, housework, attendance at school, or visiting friends or relatives, worked an average of 201 days. The approximately 66 days they lost presumably were due to conditions of employment such as weather, crop losses, or slack periods between harvest operations. They lost 39 of these days in Florida and 26 in Ohio. Such losses amounted to approximately 23 percent of their worktime in Ohio and 26 percent in Florida.

Earnings of adult workers for the 12 months ranged from $335 to $2,200, with an average of $1,237. Those persons who lost no time because of illness, housework, school attendance, or other personal reasons, earned an average of $1,533.

Four of the twenty-five workers who moved between Ohio and Florida attended school in Florida but worked in harvests in Ohio. Their work contribution was of some importance as they averaged 35 days of employment and $175 in earnings during the summer in Ohio.

Data for the Florida-to-Ohio group were excluded from all tabulations as their conditions of employment differed so radically from those of the usual migratory worker.

Movement From Other States to Florida

One group which was included in the regular tabulations should be given consideration. This group of "migrants to Florida" comprised workers with homes in Georgia, South Carolina, Arkansas, and other States, who were working in Florida at the time of interview. They may be considered as a source for replenishment of the Atlantic coast migratory stream. To summarize their employment record during the 12 months just previous to interview, they had worked an average of 169 days, or 15 less than the more seasonal migrant along the Atlantic coast. They earned an average of $4.05 a day, or approximately $1 less than the seasonal migrant. Their average earnings for the year totaled $684, or only three-fourths as much as those of the average migrant. The shift from sharecropping or cottonpicking usually is not made in a single season. New skills are called for as is some knowledge of where to find employment. No inquiry was made as to their earnings in previous years and whether the $684 was above or below their usual level of income is not known. But it may be assumed that either their previous work or their earnings had not been entirely satisfactory, or they would not have moved to a new State to find employment.

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